M. KAPLAN DIARIES - TRANSCRIPTION

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Saturday night, September 25, 1926

The Yom Kippur services ran off as well as usual. The substitution of the 130th Psalm met with the approval of men like Sol Lamport, Siegel, Shevitz - all men over 50 who have more or less of intensive Jewish background. The bulk of the members are rather pliable. They would consent to even more radical changes. The only ones that grumbled were some newcomers who simply rented seats for the High Holiday services.

The sermon on Moral growth took me about one hour and twenty or twenty-five minutes. Although the people listened attentively I felt that it was too long anyhow. As time goes on I seem to get less of an enthusiastic response to my sermons. The people are used to my style of speaking, and take for granted that I have something to say.

The services were scheduled for 6:30. We began at 6:45. Due to the fact that a post-card had been sent out asking the people to be on time services began with the synagogue almost full. I spent about twenty minutes explaining the reason for the change from Kol Nidre to the 130th Psalm. It was about 7:30 when I rose to deliver my sermon. After the service we said ~~Yalle~~ Ya-alle, etc. omitting the p 174. Services were concluded about 9:25.

Next day services were scheduled to start at 8:30. We got through with the reading of the Torah and Maftir about 11:15. I then rose to explain the Maftir over which I spent more than an hour. The memorial services were over by 1:00. Musaph took till 4:30. In the course of it I spoke three times - the first time about the poem the second time about the Abodah, and the third time I read and explained the chapter in Dubnow's essay on Jewish History dealing with the Jews after 1492. This was to supersede the martyrology in the Selihoth. I spoke a fourth time when I read the Maftir of the Minha service - briefly this time. Minha lasted to 5:45, Neilah was concluded

at 7:05. In place of פ' 175 we exclaimed פ' 175.

Next year, p. G., if I will officiate at the Yom Kippur services I expect to begin at 9:00. Even with services terminating about 6:00 there is plenty of time for the shortened ritual that we follow.

On Sunday, Sept. 19, the day after Yom Kippur, the Teachers Institute began the eighteenth year of its work. There was the usual assembly with opening remarks by me. I have gotten so far away from writing and speaking Hebrew that I did not even attempt to make my remarks in that language. This inability to use the Hebrew fluently always gives me the blues. In contrast with Scharfstein who recently returned from the trip to Palestine, and who gave an account of his stay there in a Hebrew that was racy and a delight to the ear, I felt quite humiliated.

The thought which I brought out in what I said was that the Institute was a place where the students should acquire not only information (פ' 175) but also intelligence (פ' 175), i.e. the power of adjusting the two worlds in which we Jews have to live, so that they become one world, and character (פ' 175) which as far as the Institute was concerned, meant loyalty to truth and loyalty to the cause of the Jewish people. What I suggested was a sort of inverted פ' 176 of the mystics.

On Tuesday, Sept. 21 I concluded 40 hours of instruction at the Training School for Jewish Social Workers. The ground covered extends as far as the Rabbinic conception of Israel. It is the one piece of work from which I get most satisfaction. On the other hand it serves to accentuate the undue proportion of time and effort I spend on the SAJ to the detriment of more permanent work that I might

do by myself. Hurwitz and Cohen of the Menorah Journal have read what I have written on Orthodox and Reform Jewry and they found the material to be just what they want for the Journal. I would have to write two more articles, one on the traditional conception and one on the proposed reconstruction to make it worth while for me to air my views again in the Menorah as I did some ten or eleven years ago. But somehow I am thwarted by the tasks at the SAJ. The consequence was that the last few weeks I have been very gloomy. The only thing that prevented me from giving in altogether too much to self-pity was the theme I had to preach on during Succoth, namely, gratitude, I could not help realizing the spiritual value of gratitude which, as I thought about it, came to mean to me the art of discovering the good in every situation in life. Certainly I have enough to be grateful for, despite my inability to achieve certain literary and scholarly ambitions that I cherish.

This morning the attendance at services was about 110 as compared with 185 on the first day of Succoth. Again the talk which I gave was calculated to rebuke me for my constant discontent. Taking the main thought from Fosdick's sermon on Faith and Moods in his little book on Faith, I explained that Koheleth gave a picture of the world as viewed by us when we are in the dumps. I added the following to the points made by Fosdick - I compared faith to music. It depends upon all our bodily and mental organs being properly attuned. I added the idea that it is not only faith in God that is a matter of moods, but faith in man p 177
In moments of impatience and of short range view of life we do not get an idea of man as he truly is or might become. The same may be applied to Israel, the agency of God's will on earth. As for the conditions essential to being in the proper mood, I quoted the rabbinic statement

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If I hadn't been eaten up with ambition I should be grateful to the point of serene happiness for having come across an idea like the foregoing and having had a chance to expound it.

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Erev Shemeni Azereth,

Wednesday, September 29, 1926

Yesterday I gave for the first time a test to applicants for admission to the Seminary. It consisted of an examination on a selection I had called from the New Republic of August 1926, dealing with the evolution of truth. I had the sixteen applicants read over the selection of about 450 words. I gave them 15 minutes to read and digest the contents. After that I asked them to return the papers and to proceed with writing out 1) a paraphrase, b) a precis, 3) an appropriate title, d) an application of the idea to some phase of Jewish life or thought. My having visited Ginzberg at his home a short time ago showed its effect. He actually condescended to ask me about the test and to glance over the passage that I had selected. At the meeting he acted as chairman in place of Adler. Before each applicant entered the faculty room I read over his answer and reported to the other members of the faculty. Those tests were certainly a more accurate guide in forming an opinion of the candidates than the answers which they gave to the none too intelligent questions hurled at them by the members of the faculty.

What to me was a most amusing incident in connection with these tests was the loud protest on the part of Hyamson against the content of the selection which dealt with the relative and changing character of truth, and Hoschander's demand that I should have stated that the selection does not represent my views. Every time I see Hoschander I feel as though I swallowed castor oil.

This morning I absented myself - probably for the first time in years - from Hoshanna Rabba services. But I am very busy these days as a result of which I went to bed late. When I woke up this morning I had a headache. The thought that I would find only a handful of people in the synagogue, the pointlessness of the entire service, and the fact that here are ahead of us three long days when we can do nothing but waste one's time in the synagogue, eat heavy meals, say the same grace after meals, and take long naps, all these factors stood in the way of my undergoing the hardship of attending services at 7:00 A.M. How in the world any one is going to get our people out of this damnable rut of futile and overabundant festivals, a special congestion of which occurs this month, is more than I can guess.

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Saturday night, October 2, 1926

I've been through hell again these last few days. Having done a little work on my "Reconstruction" during the week of Hol-Hamoed. I was unable to give sufficient time to the Sh'mini Azereth sermon. The result was a half digested idea on Public Worship. If everything had gone right that morning I might have gotten away with it. But I was physically on edge. In addition some women came and sat down in front just as I was beginning to speak. Before I plodded through about four sentences a barrel organ began to play. I could not find the right word for what I wanted to express. Although I managed to work myself into some kind of strained enthusiasm, sweating all the time not only perspiration but blood, I was unhappy that I spoiled what might have been a good sermon.

In the afternoon Harry and Abe Liebovitz, Joe Levy and Wachman met me at my home. I had asked Liebovitz to call that meeting. While I was sparring for some remark that might serve as an introduction to what I wanted to discuss with them, H. Liebovitz asked me

why I objected to the young folks' having a beefsteak party. He alluded to a remark I had made that morning during the service that the young folks would do much more for the SAJ if they would form a choir than if they were to hold beefsteak parties. This afforded me an opening for what I wanted to say to the committee that met me. The action of the young folks in ignoring my objection to the vulgarity of the invitation which they were sending out for the initial "get together" of the year was typical of how little was accomplished by all the work that I had put into the SAJ during a period of nearly five years. I suggested that it might be advisable to get a young man who would give all of his time to the Society. I was getting weary of the strain due to lack of cooperation. A young man who would be in a position to visit each member personally might succeed in getting more cooperation.

As on previous occasions when I made such a suggestion they made it plain to me that if I let go of the SAJ it would break up entirely. I had not the courage or the hardihood to tell them to take the logical consequences of the lack of cooperation. Those at least who were there certainly did give a good deal of time, effort and money. As for the rest of the membership, the committee undertook to use various means of arousing their interest.

I had been prepared for such an outcome of the conference, and I therefore went on with the discussion of some detail improvements in the running of the SAJ. I also asked for authority to engage the services of Mr. Beck, a young man from Cleveland both to give a course of lectures to the women on Monday mornings and to assist me with the proposed quarterly that is to be issued with the aid of the Rabbinic Council.

The services Simhas Torah night were disheartneing. The cantor Nathanson is both lazy and indifferent. He cannot be gotten to do more than stand before the Almemar and go through mechanically the service. He does not show the least initiative or make the least effort to work up enthusiasm for the service or for the singing. Feeling as I did that evening, after the morning's experience and futile conference of the afternoon, and having been rebuffed by Nathanson when I took him to task for his lack of interest, I let the service run on by itself. The consequent disorder and chaos only helped to aggravate my discouragement. After supper that evening Lena and I invited three members and their wives to our house to celebrate Simhath Torah. Sol Lamport was to be the life of the party. I cannot say that I was very much exhilarated. Not knowing Hebrew and being at some remove from the traditional mode of Jewish life the others present could not join in the singing - what little of it there was.

This morning the attendance dropped down to about 85, as compared with about 225 of Sh'mini Azereth. Again I came but half prepared with a talk on Creation vs. Evolution. My mind kept on working to the last minute before going onto the pulpit. In addition I was debating with myself whether or not I should preach altogether. My mind was torn between fear that I might again preach a poor sermon and the desire to redeem myself. The small attendance militated against my speaking, the fact that I had spent the whole of last night preparing drove me on to speak. In this frame of mind I was up to the time when the congregation was chanting the last verse before the closing ark. I had to make a choice. In one second I could either tell the cantor to resume the service, or I could step into the pulpit. I finally decided for the latter. I made a brave attempt to set forth a most complicated theme before a motley

crowd consisting of people of limited understanding. It seemed to have gone clean over their heads, but at least it went.

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Sunday, November 7, 1926

Last month I had a run in with the "Orthodox" members of the Executive Committee of the Rabbinic Assembly. The first meeting this year of the Executive Committee of which I am a member took place at the beginning of last month. At that meeting various propositions dealing with publications to be undertaken by the Assembly were brought up by Greenberg and Finkelstein. I could see at once that these two men were planning a counter move to the SAJ Quarterly that was to be published by the Rabbinic Council of the SAJ. Instead of opposing their moves I expressed myself in favor of their suggestions.

A week or so after that meeting Elias Margolis asked me to arrange for a conference between a committee of his and me. On that committee were Jacob Kohn, Finkelstein, Israel Goldman and Landesman. They asked me whether I would be willing to work together with them in issuing a Rabbinical Assembly periodical. I said that I would be willing to give up the SAJ Quarterly provided it were clearly understood that the Rabbinic Assembly would back the policy of frankness and outspokenness in the expression of ideas concerning questions of Jewish life and thought. They agreed to my condition. We met again and formulated a statement embodying that condition. That statement was to appear in every number of the periodical. The Executive Committee of the Rabbinic Assembly then met and ratified the resolution. Elias Margolis was then appointed chairman of committee to work out detail plans of publication. When the Executive Committee met a second time with Drob in the Chair, they let the cat out of the bag. In explaining to Morris Levine what had been accomplished up to that time,

Drob said that I had agreed to cooperate with the Rabbinic Assembly in the publication of a periodical. The understanding was that I was to give up the SAJ Quarterly and disband the Rabbinic Council of the SAJ. To the last remark I took exception. Finkelstein then burst out that they (the rest of the Margolis committee) had all the time taken for granted that I intended to disband the SAJ Council. I asked why they had not mentioned the fact that they wanted me to disband the council. I characterized Finkelstein's conduct as unethical. He jumped up and shouted that he objected to being called a liar. I told him that he ought to tell the truth although he insists on wearing a cap. After an exchange of hot words we cooled down. I told them I could not answer at once whether I would be willing to disband the Council.

Jacob Kohn who did not attend the meeting at which the quarrel took place, saw me a few days afterwards and told me that as a member of the original Margolis Committee he was opposed to their insisting upon my disbanding the SAJ Council. What he had said was that not having the task of publishing the periodical it would dissolve of its own accord. Goldman upon whom I relied to help me in the Council, took the same attitude as Kohn.

As I have been thinking the matter over I see that I have no right to accept the chief editorship of the periodical. Most of my time would have to be spent in arguing and scrapping. Those whose articles I would refuse would become my bitterest enemies. The material which the men would sent it would probably be worthless. My own work would be interrupted. Why then embroil myself in such a mess?

In connection with these negotiations Drob also wrote me a letter asking me to accept the chairmanship of the study groups. This is part of his and Finkelstein's plan to take me away from the SAJ activities which are likely to lead to the formation of an insurgent group and to absorb me into the main body of the Rabbinic

Assembly. From this point of view they probably mean well. But I cannot see how it is possible for me to undertake all that work, especially in view of the endless number of meetings that it would involve.

I have been much more satisfied with myself this last month on account of my having made some progress in my writing. Tonight I finished in rough the Rabbinic Conception of God Israel and Torah. This state of mind prevented me from growing morose over the misfortunes that befell my two brothers-in-law, Israeli and Jacob Rubin. Israeli has had a nervous breakdown, due probably to his financial losses in speculation. Jacob Rubin fell down in an elevator shaft, and narrowly escaped being killed. May God grant both of them a speedy recovery.

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Wednesday, November 24, 1926

The negotiations with the Rabbinic Assembly have resulted in the abandonment of the plan to issue a magazine, Drob kept on maneouvering until he made out a case for the inadvisability of the Rabbinic Assembly's issuing such a magazine. In the course of the discussion it became apparent that Drob was an uncompromising fundamentalist, while Finkelstein seemed a sort of Jekyll-Hyde combination of fanatical and wily Jesuit and well meaning and generous opponent of radically constructive measures.

I was to Hartford on Monday, Nov. 22, where I addressed the meeting of the Hartford branch of Council of Jewish Women. My subject was Judaism as a Civilization. The address was well received. In the evening I spoke before a group of about fifty to sixty of the more intelligent among the members of Rabbi Morris Silverman's congregation.

The purpose of the meeting was the formation of an SAJ Chapter. My remarks had the desired effect. A chapter was formed with a certain Miss Fisher as president.

From Hartford I went to see poor Phineas at the New England Sanitarium at Melrose near Boston. The condition I found him in is too sad for words. He is afflicted with melancholia, he is obsessed by a sense of sin and black despair. He talks, or rather mumbles constantly of his having lost his will power, of having ruined everybody, etc. Nothing that I said to divert his mind from the obsession had the least effect.

Sophie is distracted in her grief and helplessness. Would to God I knew what to do to be of real help to her and to Phineas in this their hour of trial.

Tonight was the second time I lectured to the special class organized by Harpf. The students are women who are engaged in social work mostly family cases. They probably had an idea I would give them a few tricks that would afford them specific aid in their work. Most of them seemed to find that my presentation of the problem of Judaism was not relevant to their own particular problems. One of them objected on the ground that I was trying to teach them Judaism. Noticing the falling off in attendance I told Harpf that I doubted whether I would continue the lectures. Although he also saw the absence of genuine interest on the part even of those who attended tonight's lecture, he tried strongly to dissuade me from discontinuing.

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Tuesday, November 30, 1926, 2:30 A.M.

I have gotten into the habit of working far into the night. The work is piling up more and more and nothing seems to be getting done. It seems to me there is nothing more essential to a feeling of serenity than getting things done. Small tasks, undertakings of limited scope are therefore more likely to produce a happy and contented disposition than undertakings of vast dimensions. Mine being that of reconstructing Judaism, God knows when I shall begin to seem some tractable formulation of the main ideas I wish to set forth, among which are 1. the importance of realizing that religion in the future must mean not subscribing to any definite dogma about God, but an [a vital and active interest in the meaning of God in human experience] unceasing and strenuous search after God. To seek God, i.e. to want to know what God is is more important than to believe in God. 2. The part to be played by Palestine is to be not that of a center radiating influence, but a central project eliciting the interest of the Jew in a common creative task. 3. The substitution of the folkway conception of the ceremonies for the legalistic attitude which is tenable only upon the assumption that they are of divine origin.

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Unfortunately there are so many disturbing and distracting duties that prevent me from concentrating all my thought and effort on this the most burning problem in the life of the Jew today, that I have to do all I can to control myself from giving way to the mulligrabs.

This whole day for example I spent in futilities. In the morning Rabbi Marvin Nathan from Philadelphia called. He wanted to get my advice and suggestions with reference to a questionnaire which he contemplates sending out to Jewish students among the colleges and universities to find out from them how they stand on the matter of religion and Judaism. I wasted, of course I should say, spent over two and a half hours with him. The only thing of interest I learned

from him was the fact that his congregation which has been of the typical German Conservative type that has a tradition of eighty-five years behind it, a congregation which for years has had men and women sit together, the organ in the service, strongly objected to R. Nathan introducing the ceremony of the Bas Mizvah.

The maddening feature of this day was the SAJ Board meeting or rather meetings which took me from 7:30 to 12:00. It was only about 10:00 that the first spark of fire was struck in the transaction of the entire evening. Spielberg who had had his eyes closed up to that time suddenly woke into life when I was warning Charles Cohen to check up the young man who has been put in charge of the subjuniors. I declared myself as opposed to D[illegible] method of training those youngsters and starting out with them by telling them that he is going to help them have an "awfully good time." I objected strongly to the fact that these youngsters were being catered to unduly in the way of giving them dances. Outdoor sport would in my opinion be far more advisable.

That gave Spielberg an opportunity to express his agreement with Cohen. From that he went off into a tirade against the SAJ failing to function as a peacemaker in a conflict that was raging between Simmons and Rentner. The outcome of the discussion which followed was that a committee on Welfare was appointed and that I have to make an attempt to induce Simmons and Rentner to consent to arbitrate without the aid of special lawyers, like Marshal and who have been called into the case. In the meantime the SAJ, which has none too glorious a reputation is getting a black eye and more of my good time has to be wasted without even the consolation, probably, of accomplishing even the insignificant task of making peace between two conceited and overambitious individuals who mean very little to the cause of Judaism.

Wednesday, December 1, 1926

Today I went to see both H.L. Simmons and Rentner. I had no difficulty in persuading the former to dismiss his special lawyer - Marshall and to be willing to submit to the aribtration of any three laymen. He went so far as to say that he was ready to bind himself to accept the decision of an arbitration board while Rentner could be free to accept or reject their decision. I did not encourage him to get into a detailed account of the controversy. In fact I purposely changed the subject as soon as I saw that he acceeded to my request. In discussing the Marshall group versus the ZOA he stated that the former were obdurate and autocratic while the leading men in the ZOA were self-sacrificing and hard working, yet because the ZOA men are not financially powerful they ought for the sake of the cause yield to the wishes of Warburg and his dique. Weitzman is the only man big enough to do athing like that. But Lipsky who is an admirable fellow cannot rise to that height.

When I saw Rentner my hopes of getting the two men to arbitrate were pretty near shattered. In the first place, when I telephoned to him that I wanted to see him, he said "If it's for some charity purpose I might save myself the trip by telling him what I wanted." When I came to his office at the appointed hour (4:00 P.M.) I had to wait a little while till he got through with some customer.

My plea to him was that as a member of the SAJ he is expected to submit his case to lay arbitration. He replied that H.L. Simmons is too shrewd a man and his lawyer Eno likewise, for a lay arbitration board to get at all the facts in the case. He must have the aid of an expert to elicit the facts. I kept on urging that people of common business sense can be trusted to get at the facts. But he kept on insisting uponhis point. Probably to get rid of me he said he would consult his lawyer, Willim Klein, and the latter's borther. I doubt very much whether he would yield.

Tonight as I walked out of the house with Lena to take my usual stroll we met Max and Sarah waiting for a taxi to take them to theatre. I was too weak willed to say no. They took us to a show called "On Approval." It was a comedy farce full of clever repartee enjoyable while one listened to it but soon forgotten. I could ill afford to spend the three hours, and I feel like kicking myself for having yielded. But I am tired and at times I do yearn for a change but not that kind. Unfortunately I do not have the opportunity to enjoy the company of intelligent friends or to take part in scintillating conversation. That is why I go to see shows. But every time I come back I swear off seeing another for a long time: but I do not stick to my resolution.

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Friday, December 3, 1926

Last night I attended and gave the principal address at a Hanna Koh banquet held by the local group of United Synagogue workers in the present campaign for membership. The banquet took place in the vestry rooms of Rabbi Solomon's synagogue on 93 St. near Broadway. There were present about sixty people representing the following four congregations: Shaarie Zedek, SAJ, Bnai Jeshurun, and Anshei Chesed, a rather dull and insipid crowd. Fortunately I had anticipated just such an uninspiring audience and therefore worked very hard during the day to have a clearly thought out message. Otherwise my remarks would have fallen very flat and I nevet would have forgiven myself. From one angle it was a good day wasted, but from another angle, I cannot afford to keep aloof from organization both for the natural advantage that it gives me personally and from the standpoint of the method of Jewish living that I continually advocate.

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Thursday, December 17, 1926 (Midnight)

On Monday, Dec. 6 Dr. Fleischman, the managing director of the Educational Alliance called on me. He wanted to get my advice with regard to the teachers of the religious school of the Alliance. Although there is very little demanded of those teachers in the way of Jewish knowledge, since the curriculum is based on the standard of three and a half hours instruction per week, he has not been able to secure teachers with personality, conviction and a genuine interest in religious instruction. Most of the teachers in his school are graduates of the HUC Teachers Institute which is conducted by Franzblau. The average salary for about fourteen hours of instruction during ten full months is $1000.

I had nothing definite to advise him, knowing as I do the general apathy that prevails among the parents of the children and the directors of the various Jewish institutions. From a consideration of a particular problem we drifted into the discussion of our experiences with men of the Greenbaum type who head the Educational Alliance. The usual anomalous situation prevails there as in many other institutions. The directors want their ideas of what the East Side needs carried out to the letter, yet they do not want to offend the religious scruples or prejudices of the Jews whose children attend the school. A teacher would not be free, for example, to tell a child that the miracles never happened. Yet they would frown down any attempt on the part of the teachers to introduce a naturalist or Hebraic spirit into the school.

Quite a number of girls celebrated their becoming Bas Mizvah at the SAJ synagogue.this year. Last Saturday Anita Finn and Sara Lamport were the celebrants. May Lamport in her odd way tried to get a number of little girls from the Talmud Torah school by the name Sara to participate in the celebration together with her own Sara,

but she could not find one, because Jewish girls when given the name Sarah usually change it to Sylvia, etc.

Last Sunday afternoon Dr. Weitzman asked me to meet him in conference together with Unterberg, Semel and Judge Rosalsky. Unterberg came but left before I arrived. The conference took place at the Hotel Ambassador. Weitzman, unfolded the story of the critical situation which confronted the Zionist movement at the present time, and of the tremendous burden that he had to bear.

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Wednesday, December 22, 1926

Weizmann was mainly interested in getting Rosalsky to accept the chairmanship of the N.Y. campaign for the United Palestine Appeal. Incidentally he was also anxious to have Bernard Semel and Judge Otto Rosalsky undertake to organize the so-called "Boale-Batim" the substantial Jewish business men who were in sympathy with the Zionist movement into a group that might act as a mediatorial body between the Zionist organization and the Marshall grup. In fact he alluded to the part we played a few years ago when we tried to mediate between him and the Brandeis group as having put the idea into his head that we might play a similar role at the present time.

Neither Semel nor Rosalsky had anything constructive to suggest. The former merely dwelt upon the rift between the ZOA and the Marshall group. He excused himself from assuming any new responsibilities in view of the manifold communal tasks imposed upon him. Rosalsky spoke in a similar vein. Incidentally I learned of J. H. Cohen's part in preventing the Orthodox Union and Aggudath Ho-rabbonim from being represented at the fiftieth anniversary celebration given to Roselsky by the Jewish Education Association. At Cohen's instigation these organizations demanded as a condition of their being repre-

sented at the celebration the J.E.A. pledge itself to give the Orthodox authority over the educational policy of the Talmud Torah and Religious schools. They were refused, and therefore did not appear at the banquet.

When Weizmann asked me for my opinion I said that the only way in which the present situation in the Zionist movement could be saved was by having a sort of business men's council who by their very interest in the movement would impress and compel the attention of the Marshall group. Once that was effected a way would be found for ironing out the differences that have arisen between the ZOA and the Marshall group. I furthermore added that Semel was the only logical man to bring about the organization of such a group.

This suggestion of mine cost me a good deal of time last week. It gave rise to three subsequent conferences and numerous telephone conversations. Semel held out against mine and Weizmann's pleadings. At the conference I had with him and Unterberg on Wednesday he suggested Morris Rottenberg. Accordingly another conference was held at Unterberg's home on Thursday night. At this meeting there were present Weizmann, Unterberg, Samuel Rottenberg, Semel, Harry Liebovitz, Albert Rosenblatt and Rosalsky. By that time I had evolved a clearer idea of what I was to advocate. Instead of a Business Men's Council as a mere emergency measure to bridge the gap between the ZOA and the Marshall group I suggested that the Zionist movement be reorganized on entirely new lines from those which characterize it at present. In fact it was this plan to reorganize the entire movement in this country that stimulated me to hold these conferences which took up a good deal of my time last week. I had become convinced that the main reason for the Zionist movement failing to make sufficient headway in this country was due largely to the anomalous type of organization. Judging by all types of organization

whether it be a peace movement or the JDC the administration consists of business men who in addition to furnishing the resources carry the responsibility for the success of the movement. It seems to be a principle that there can be no continuous taxation without responsibility. In the Zionist movement, however, the ones who first joined it because of its appeal to them have both assumed charge of it and have to earn their livelihood from it. This exposed them to the charge which in itself is quite unjustified, that they were not and could not be disinterested supporters of the movement. My feeling is that this form of organization is not likely to inspire confidence either in the non-Jewish authorities that have to treat with the sponsors of the movement or with the doubting Thomases among the Jews themselves. A far healtheir type of organization would be one in which the men of means would assume charge and make themselves responsibel for the administration of the movement, and men like Lipsky Neumann etc. would act in the capacity of executives.

Weizmann rec?(192) my analysis of the evil inherent in the Zionist work at the present time, and approved of the remedy I suggested. Semel presented difficulties in the way of carrying out such a remedy. The others accepted my plan with qualifications. The upshot was that those present organized themselves as a committee primarily to negotiate with Marshall for the purpose of bringing about peace between him and the ZOA and secondarily to further the United Palestine Appeal, and possibly also to look into the possibility of putting the ZOA on a more efficient basis.

These conferences cost me an additional four hours Sunday night. S.C. Lamport and David Brown came to the SAJ House while I was listening to the discussion which followed Emanuel Neumann's excellent refutation of Pritchet's Report and said they wanted to talk to me about the intrigues of the ZOA. They evidently intended

to have me deliver their accusations to Weizmann, but I have more important work to do. I had to invite them, however, to my house and from ten to two in the morning they gave me a line of talk in which they made out Weizmann to be a coward who is afraid of Lipsky, Neumann and their nunions in the ZOA. These men, according to Brown, did everything in their power to/sabotage the United Jewish Campaign and practically succeeded in the New England States. At the Boston convention which took place recently Weizmann whom Warburg had given $50,000 for Palestine in the hope that he would have more courage to break with Lipsky, Wise, etc. took special pains to express his gratitude to them for what they did lastyear and gave the impression that the negotiations with the Jewish Agency people were weal on their way again, when in actuality no steps whatever had been taken in that direction.

What Brown said of Wise, or rather insinuated concerning him is unfit for print. Brown insisted that he had made these charges repeatedly in the hope that he would be sued for libel, but without avail.

Thursday, December 23, 1926

Although I talked over my plan for the reorganization of the ZOA with quite a number of people the only ones who put a doubt into my mind as to its value and workability were Emanuel Neumann and Zeldin who came to see me yesterday at Weizmann's suggestion to consult me about a chairman for the N.Y. campaign. Weizmann imagines I have influence with the Jewish "bourjouks" of this section. Neumann made it clear to me that the Zionist movement involves too highly specialized knowledge and intellectual grasp as well as power of articulation for ordinary laymen to trust themselves with it. We have not produced Jewish business men who are qualified to conduct a Zionist meeting. When Brown, for instance, started his antics

by jumping up on the table, and taking off his coat in an appeal for funds for Palestine, he only called forth disgust on the part of the more refined and worthwhile elements in the Zionist ranks.

The fires of ambition to awaken the Jewish mind to an honest facing of the problem of Judaism, and to the need of openmindedness and untrammeled freedom in working out what I believe to be the fourth stage of Judaism's career, are still burning under the ashes of placid routine. I have not yet given up hope of having areally free field for the expression of my views with regard to what is necessary for the regeneration of Judaism. In my daydreaming my mind always reverts to Wise's Institute as the only place where I could give my innermost holiest desires free reign. About two months ago Chipkin casually informed me that Maximon resigned as instructor of Midrash in the Institute of Religion. This news at once set my brain working at a great pace as to the possibility of my reopening negotiations with Wise. I lay awake the greater part of the night following picturing to myself what I would do if Wise were to telephone to me the next morning that he wanted to see me. When next morning and a number of other mornings came without the expected call I resumed my feeling of complacency in the continuance of the status quo. About two weeks ago after a conversation I had with one of the Seminary students, I realized the hypocrisy which existed among the students and to which as a member of the faculty I indirectly contributed, I actually went as far as picking up the receiver and calling up Wise's home. I learned he was at the Synagogue House. When I called for the Synagogue House the wire was busy. I had not the courage to try the line a second time.

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Last night as I was taking a walk after nine o'clock on Central Park West I met George Kohut. He made me walk with him back and forth on the avenue. In his conversation he dwelt on one point, namely that I owe it to the cause of Judaism to take off a Sabbatical year to write out my philosophy of Judaism. He said I was the only man he knew of who had something constructive to offer, and that I was not doing the right thing in postponing my task. I imagine he was throwing out a bait. I did bite. After feeling my way with him I stated plainly that if Wise had been more patient with my procrastination three years ago, and had been willing to come to a definite understanding with me as to terms of tenure, etc., I probably would have accepted the position at the Institute. I am awaiting anxiously the outcome of this conversation.

* * * *

Saturday night, December 25, 1926

Two interesting stories were told by Weizmann the last time I saw him at the Unterbergs.

It was toward the end of the war - during the High Holiday season - Weizmann was in Palestine seated in a train that was to take him to Egypt from where he was to go to the Continent. There were two old Austrian Jews with long beards and earlocks. They asked W. where he was traveling. He told them that he was leaving Palestine. "But how can you leave us in the lurch at this time of the year?" they asked. "What is the trouble? What do you refer to?" "Why don't you know that Succoth is coming and there are no "Hadassim to be had?" "What can I do in the matter?" "We used to get the hadassim from Trieste. If you would use your influence with Allenby he would see to it that we get them." "But don't you know the English are at war with the Austrians?" That was a revelation to them. When W. came to Alexandria he met Allenby there. The latter showed him a

letter he had received from certain Jews in Palestine that he secure Hadassim from Trieste. "I can't get them from Trieste," said Allenby "but I can remove the quarantine from Egypt and have them sent from here." Those Jews got their Hadassim.

The other story was about An-sky who was engaged in religious work during the war in the region of Pshemishel. He leanned of a village that had been left without mazoth for Passover, and the Jews rather than eat leavened bread were ready to die of starvation. He bent every effort to get the mazoth, although he himself was not much of a believer. He finally succeeded in getting into the town several thousand pounds of mazoth. When he brought them to the town the elders said to him "We don't know who you are, and what you are, and we are not going to have you tell us. But what we should like to know is what did you do to have deserved that such a mizvah should be performed by you?"

* * *

Wednesday, January 12, 1927

The incredible has happened. Wise once again asked me to join the faculty of the JIR. This time I finally said Yes. And this is how it happened. A week ago last Saturday night, Jan. 1 George Kohut called me up on the phone and told me that he had apprised W. of the conversation he had had with me recently, and that I should expect to hear from Wise himself within a day or two. On Monday, Jan. 3 W asked me to meet him, Judge Mack and Kohut at his office. W. opened the discussion by telling Mack that he had learned from K. that I was not altogether irreceptive to an invitation from the JIR to join the faculty. I explained why I was willing to consider leaving the Seminary. It was mainly due to my disappointment in finding that the graduates who theoretically were entirely in sympathy with my views showed no inclination to help me in putting

them into effect. In the Seminary itself the attitude toward me had not grown in the least bit friendlier. I was therefore prepared to consider accepting W's offer, provided I would not encroach in the teaching of my subject "the philosophy of Judaism" upon the territory of any of the men who are there now. I also wanted to be assured that my position would be secure. The three of them, Wise, Mack and Kohut made it clear to me that they were anxious to have me join their faculty and that they would do everything in their power to meet my wishes in every respect, salary, congeniality and permanence. Mack expressed himself to the effect that he was especially interested in having the JIR produce scholars even more than rabbis and nothing would please him more than if I were to publish and stimulate creative work in the institution.

I went to see W again the next day (Tues., Jan. 4) to have some questions about the position cleared up in my mind. When I left him I felt that I had no right to hesitate any longer about accepting his offer. In the course of the conversation he said to me, "Kaplan you will be the first man on the faculty for whose sake students will join our institution."

After these conversations I broached the matter to Joe Levy. After that I talked to Isidore on Friday night. Joe Levy was, as I had expected him to be, quite opposed to my making the change. But he is a man one can reason with, especially when I have others to help me. Upon his advice I asked Harry and Abe Liebovitz to meet me late Saturday afternoon to come to my house. Joe Levy was also present. I told them that Wise had again invited me to join the faculty of the JIR. I explained to them that besides my inability to carry out many projects in the SAJ - such as publishing a prayer book, or articles of a more progressive nature - there was complete indifference on the part of the Seminary authorities to the Teachers Institute. I cited

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the instance of their failure to do anything with the $?00,000 which Unterberg donated for a building for the Teachers Institute.

They were not prepared to answer offhand what they thought of my intention to resign from the Seminary and accept the position at the JIR. What seemed to weigh with Harry Liebovitz most at the time was how the public would interpret my change. Levy argued that it would be taken to mean that I had broken not only with Orthodoxy but also with Conservatism. I replied that in leaving the Seminary I would be in a position to define Conservatism, as to have it represent a positive program of Jewish life, whereas the Seminary has permitted that term to remain void of meaning.

It was their wish that I put the matter also before Unterberg and that all of us meet again before coming to a final decision. Unterberg came to see me Sunday morning, Jan. 9. He assented more readily to my plan than I had expected. The four of us and Isidore met again at my house Monday night, Jan. 10. The Board meeting of the SAJ had to be called off to make this conference possible. After going over the same arguments as on the previous occasion, Abe Liebovitz declared himself one hundred percent in favor. So did Isidore. The others fell in and even Joe Levy yielded.

Accordingly I called up Wise on Tuesday the 11th. When I spoke to him on the phone he told me he had only a few minutes time to see me but he wanted to know whether I had come to a decision. When I told him "Yes," he asked whether it was nearer to the negative or the affirmative. I replied "Affirmative." I came to his study where I met him together with Kohut. I told him that I had decided to avail myself of the opportunity which he so graciously offered me to devote myself to the study of the problem how to make Judaism function in the life of the Jew. Needless to say that he was very much pleased. But he warned me that I should not mind the

minor difficulties that might present themselves in the beginning. I should remember that they want me for myself and extended to me a hearty welcome.

Tonight about 7:30 Wise called me up and informed me that both the Faculty and the Board of Trustees met this afternoon and both voted unanimously upon the desirability of inviting me to join the faculty. He added that the name of the chair was not decided upon. Some did not seem to think the term "Philosophy of Judaism" a happy one. But that is a very minor detail.

The next problem will be how to resign from the Seminary without leaving behind any ill feelings. In fact that was one of the points I had mentioned to Wise, but the plan I had suggested of their writing directly to the Seminary did not meet with Mack's approval, and he is the last man that would do anything unethical.

Thank God that I need no longer accuse myself of being cowardly and vacillating. The Rubicon has been crossed.

That was a wise thing Isidore said the other night. He did not realize how much what he said meant to me. Referring to an artist friend of his he said that the great tragedy of that artist's life was that instead of giving himself to his art he spent his time nursing a blind mother. This applies in a figurative sense both to my Alma Mater and my mother.

* * * *

Wednesday, January 19, 1927

Last Wednesday night at &;30 Wise called me up to tell me that the Board of Trustees and the Faculty of the JIR voted unanimously to extend the invitation to me to join the faculty. My coming was acclaimed with joy. Next morning Kohut told me the same thing over the phone.

Yesterday I showed Wise a draft of the resignation. He thought it was admirable. Today I mailed it to Adler and a copy of it to Judge Mack at Wise's suggestion. It reads as follows:

Ever since I have been associated with the Jewish Theological Seminary of America as a member of the Faculty I have been pursuing various studies with the object of formulating a teachable program of Jewish life. In my opinion, neither the Orthodoxy of Samson Raphael Hirsch and Sabado Morais, nor the Reform of Abraham Geiger and Kaufman Kohler, offers a satisfactory program. But what those leaders proposed has at least the merit of being definite and consistent. It is such definiteness and consistency that I have been anxious to find in what is usually called Conservative Judaism.

In my humble way I have worked out a conception of Conservative Judaism to the teaching which I should now like to devote myself. That conception is based upon the principle that both the national and the religious element in traditional Judaism must be conserved and developed. By omitting either of these elements we are bound to break completely with the Judaism of the past. It is not merely in regard to the rebuilding of Palestine as a Jewish Homeland that Conservative Judaism should differ from Reform, but also in regard to the retention of all that social content and cultural activity which go together with the traditional conception of Israel as a distinct people. Furthermore, Conservative Judaism should also differ radically from Orthodoxy in being prepared to reckon courageously in all of its educational and religious activities with the established conclusions of comparative religion and Biblical scholarship. Certainly no study of Judaism can call itself scientific which seeks to evade those conclusions.

It was inevitable that some of the ideas which had taken root in my mind should color my teaching both at the Seminary and at the Teachers Institute. This was known to the late Dr. Schecter, and has also been known to you and other members of the Faculty. Though seldom was anything of a disapproving nature said to me on that subject, I could not help but sense a feeling of opposition to the spirit in which I have been teaching. A few years ago, when I published some of my views, and organized the Society for the Renascence of Judaism that opposition bore down on me quite heavily. Since then I have felt it my duty to avoid publishing anything that might embarrass the Seminary.

As a consequence, I have gotten into a state of mind which is by no means conducive to such creative work as I should like to do in the field of Judaism. Yet I cannot reconcile myself to a policy of drift. Being passive at the present time is not a case of letting well enough alone. In my opinion, the condition of so-called Conservative Judaism is far from being well enough. That a Conservative Jew is one who has ceased being Orthodox, but has not yet become Reform, though said in jest, is largely true to fact. It is high time that some steps be taken to develop the theoretic and practical implications of Conservative Judaism. My usefulness, however, in that capacity is bound to be curtailed unless I be free to voice my opinions concerning the spiritual needs of Jewish life, without continually having in mind that I might be jeopardizing the interests of the Seminary.

In view of all this, I deem it advisable to tender my resignation from the Seminary both as professor of Homiletics and Principal of the Teachers Institute, the resignation to go into effect at the end of the academic year, or at the pleasure of the Board of Trustees.

I am deeply appreciative of all that I owe to the Seminary and it is my heartfelt prayer that its future be glorious and blessed. I shall always be grateful to you and the other members of the Faculty for the courtesies and good will shown me during all the years I have been at the Seminary. Though we may differ in our views, I hope that I shall always deserve your confidence in my sincerity and devotion to the cause of Judaism.

* * *

Wednesday, January 26, 1927

On Thursday, January 13, I got word from Weizmann that a tentative draft of a letter to be sent by him to Marshall had been formulated by him, and was to be taken to Brown by the committee consisting of Semel, Rottenberg and S. C. Lamport. I learned later that these men had met Marshall in the course of that week and that he had insisted upon having Brown conciliated. Accordingly Weizmann wanted me to be present at the conference that was to take place with Brown to make sure that the Zionist cause be spared humiliation. I rushed down at once to the office of the JDC in the Pershing Building on E. 42 St. There Brown showed us the letter which in his opinion Weizmann would have to sign if he wanted to concilate the hundreds of men in the Jewish campaign whom the Zionists had offended. The letter was a merciless onslaught on the Zionists. Semel and I undertook to blue pencil it. Brown went up in the air when he was told of our deliberations. Then began the haggling over phrases and sentences that lasted until late next Friday. On Friday morning I went along with the committee to see Weizmann to get his consent on what we left of Brown's letter together with our emendations. Lipsky was also there. We did not have to stay more than an hour before he gave his assent to the draft we showed him after having suggested merely a few verbal changes. We left him to go back to Brown as he said to us,

"I will sign any statement which you gentlemen will ask me to." The real tussle began when we got over to Brown. In all these negotiations I saw in him little more than a loud opinionated Jewish Babbit. My own contribution to the affair consisted in sounding the note in the letter that W signed to the effect that Zionists must learn to tolerate those who believe in other methods of helping Jewry than by Zionism, in having many a passage of bitter words with Brown and in leaving the committee in a huff late Friday afternoon because they showed so much patience with Brown.

On Thursday, Jan. 20 after the regular meeting of the Teachers Institute staff I informed them of my resignation from the Seminary. They were staggered by the news. Each one made a fervent plea that I reconsider the resignation. In their opinion I ought to place the interests of the Teachers Institute and of the cause of Jewish Education above what they termed my personal happiness and need for untrammeled self-expression. I received subsequently a letter from them in which they reiterated their plea. The letter was signed by every one on the staff.

So far not a word from Adler.

* * *

Thursday, February 10, 1927

I received a letter from Adler dated Jan. 26. It was suave and cold. It contained no suggestion of a possible reconsideration of the step I had taken. I felt that his letter called for an answer. My second letter was less affable than the first. There are rumors and rumblings. I was told that Ginzberg whom Kadushin described to me as insanely jealous of my influence upon the students, had a hand in the letter which Adler wrote to me. By this time everybody in the immediate circle of the Seminary knows that I expect to join the JIR faculty.

On Saturday night, Jan. 30 I read a paper entitled "Toward a Reconstitution of Judaism" at the first session of the Menorah Conference which took place at Steinway Hall on W. 57 St. It was very well received. Lewis Mumford and Irwin Edman preceded me. They gave pleasing little talks with no special point to what they said.

I spent the greater part of the day following listening to the different talks given by men of ability on various fields of science and social work. The ease and fluency and eloquence with which each and every one spoke made me quite conscious of my limitations.

* * * *

Friday, February 11, 1927

Whenever I read the Psalms I can not help but believe that the author of most of them suffered from a pathological case of persecution complex. That seems to be the trouble with all defeated propagandists. That is most likely the reason the Psalms have been such favorites with the Synagogue and the Church.

* * * *

Saturday, February 12, 1927

This evening David Goldstein, Milton Steinberg and Henry Rosenthal, the most wide awak and earnest men in the student body of the Seminary, came to speak to me about my resignation from the Seminary. They showed me a copy of a statement that they had presented to Adler last Wednesday, which contained a list of grievances against the curriculum of the Seminary and the general spirit that prevails there. It is a twenty-page document written in Rosenthal's characteristic style, trenchant, incisive and challenging. It must have cut Adler to the quick. No wonder he remarked to the men after they were through conferring with him that it was the worst afternoon he had spent in years. The document, from the hurried reading I gave it,

seems almost heartless in its analysis of the situation. It speaks of the men being intellectually bullied, of their self-respect being squashed, It exposes the sham of the lecture method, and above all it flays mercilessly both Hyamson and Hoschander as incompetent and inefficient. Anything more savage I could not conceive. This document received the approval of 36 out of 42 students.

I explained to them why I had sent in my resignation. They asked me to mention some specific cases of interference on the part of the Seminary. I adverted to the attacks about five years ago and three years ago. But I made clear to them that it was the general spirit of hostility which I encountered among the older alumni who were under the influence of Adler and Ginzberg rather than any specific case of interference that made my stay difficult. The trouble is that Wise and the students of the JIR have been announcing my joining the JIR at every possible opportunity. Nevertheless I made it clear to the three men that if I were assured perfect freedom to teach and publish my views, and to put into practice the implications of those views, I would certainly prefer continuing my work at the Seminary.

* * *

Wednesday, February 23, 1927

Events moved pretty fast last week. The Executive Committee of the Rabbinical Assembly bestirred itself and sent out notices for a meeting to consider a "serious situation which had arisen in the Seminary." The meeting took place last Thursday and they unanimously adopted a resolution that they would do everything within reason to prevent my severing connections with the Seminary. They lived up to that resolution. Right after the meeting they came in a body to ask me to withdraw the resignation. While I was by no means pleased with the contents of the resolution, I took into consideration the fact that after all it was a composite statement representing views of men who were motivated

by conflicting reasons for asking me to remain in the Seminary. Like all such composite statements it was bound to be weak. That the Executive Committee should take a hand in the matter altogether, and that men like Drob and Jacob Kohn should come to see me, the latter actually having come three times within three days, was the most that I could ever have a right to expect. The only argument that had any weight with me was the one used by Simon Greenberg to the effect that if I went to the JIR the liberal forces in the Seminary clientelle would become demoralized, since they could not possibly follow me to Wise's Institute. Their resolution was forwarded to Adler.

On Saturday I received a copy of a letter signed by the students of the Seminary which ~~xxx~~ had been sent to Adler. That letter had teeth to it. In fact I considered it a bit impudent. It had evidently been composed by Henry Rosenthal who can write in vitriolic style. I felt compllled to call him up and to ask him to tone down one paragraph in particular.

Last night the Seminary Board met. Adler did not present my resignation but had decided to confer with me. This morning when I came to the Seminary he asked me through Finkelstein to see him today. I met him this afternoon. The conference lasted nearly two hours. He began by saying that he had received word from the alumni that I was ready to withdraw my resignation. I replied that my action depended upon the result of our conference. He then took up my two letters point by point. He certainly showed a decided tendency to yield though he tried to keep up a bold front. The main points of interest were the following:

1. He tried to question my statement about there being established conclusions of biblical scholarship and comparative religion. I told him that in my opinion there was no disagreement among biblical scholars as to the non-Mosaic authorship of the Torah, nor among

scholars of religion that there was no possiblity of a pure monotheism having existed in the days of Moses. While non-committal himself, he said that there was room in the traditional conception of Judaism for both of these negations. Of course I disagreed with him emphatically.

2. He agreed with what I said in the second letter that in my opinion the Seminary was not committed to either Orthodoxy or Conservatism but to a maximum program on the Jewish mode of life and for a maximum knowledge of the sources asa prerequisite to spiritual leadership.

3. He said that he was not aware of any one having pried into the way the students observed the Sabbath. Only once did it occur that a Trustee - one of the left overs of the JTS of NY - told him about a student riding on the Sabbath, but nothing came of the affair.

4. As regards my apprehendion that the Seminary would merge with the Yeshiva, there need be no fear of that on my part for negotiations have been broken off definitely. Even when he had contemplated bringing together the two institutions he had in mind the possibility of keeping two distinct faculties, one representing the Orthodox and the other Conservative Judaism. As precedent for such cooperation he cited the instance of the University in Strassbourg where theology is taught both by Catholic and Protestant professors. Such a scheme amused me inwardly, for I would never have thought Adler so naive and impractical as to dream of two kinds of Jewish theology being officially recognized in the same institution.

For the first time in all the years that I have known him did he display a trace of unoffical humanness in his makeup. He mentioned that for two nights his sleep was troubled on account of my resignation. He confessed to something like a note of doubt as to the wisdom of the course he had pursued during all the years he had worked

for the Seminary. He was getting old and began to entertain fears that his life work had been all in vain.

I yielded and withdrew my resignation. He handed me back both letters. Then he said that if ever I felt like resigning I should first come and talk the matter over with him, implying that he had felt hurt at my having kept him at arm's length. Likewise if I ever did anything which would make my stay impossible, he too would have a talk with me instead of writing letters. Personally I thought that these remarks of his were totally inappropriate at that moment, and they left a bad taste in my mouth. But this is typical of the kind of thing I must expect for the rest of my days at the Seminary. At bottom Adler and I do live in different universes of discourse.

At eight o'clock this evening I called up Wise and told him that I wanted to speak to him. He was ready to see me at once. I went over the entire situation with him and told him that I had withdrawn my resignation. He took it in a magnanimous spirit despite the keen disappointment he felt in having to give up the idea of my coming to the JIR. He repeated twice what he had said today at lunch to his wife, that if in the course of a year or so I would accomplish one-tenth of what he hoped for from me he would have me appointed to the presidency of the JIR. While it was certainly a high compliment that he paid me, nevertheless that is the one outcome of the conversation with the JIR that I least regret having missed. Somehow presidencies and deanships don't tempt me.

Another chapter of my struggle for freedom and self-expression as a condition to serving the cause of Judaism has come to an end. What this signifies only time will tell.

* * * *

Wednesday, March 9, 1927

During the last two weeks I have put in quite a bit of work in the way of writing and lecturing. I had undertaken to give a series of three lectures in Hebrew at the Hebrew Teachers College of Boston. I first prepared the text in English and then translated it into Hebrew. That took me between two and three weeks. While in Boston I stopped with the Hurwitchs. Louis Hurwitch is the Executive Director of the Bureau of Jewish Education in Boston. It was at his invitation that I gave those lectures.

Hurwitch is a man who without the frills and fanfares of the professional educator has managed to do a remarkable piece of work in Boston. In addition to the educational work in the Hebrew schools he has brought the Teachers College in the course of the five years of its existence to a point where its standards are almost the same as those of the Teachers Institute here, despite the greater resources we have here and the larger number of students we can draw upon.

* * *

Saturday night, May 14, 1927

On the whole I have behaved pretty well the last two months. Except for an occasional attack of the blues I have been working quite steadily. Nothing of any account has happened to me during the interim. It seems that I am beginning to get tired of this journal. Everything is so commonplace and the little spare time I have left I want to devote to serious writing. I shall soon be forty-six and not a single book to my credit. What a shame! Still, I must not give up.

The SAJ is dull and stationary. Dinin is cold, disinterested, stupid. How I manage to work up enough enthusiasm to preach on the Sabbath mornings is more than I can explain. Probably sheer momentum. The indifference of the Board of trustees has showed itself in a most unforgivable act of negligence that I should never have

imagined them capable of. In Feb., 1923 they voted me a 15 year endowment policy for $100,000. Not long after that resolution was passed Nat Turrel who was entrusted with the task of attending to the details informed me that the committee which had taken the matter under advisement, on finding so large a policy too expensive decided to make it a $50,000 life, plus an amount which in five years would total sufficiently to make the policy self paying. After a while I received the policy. That was the last I had heard of the matter, until recently when in view of the misfortune which befel Phineas I thought I might have to draw upon the money they had laid aside. When I asked A. Liebovitz to let me have $2000 I woke up to the fact that nothing had been paid in by the SAJ toward the amount that was supposed after five years to yield enough income to cover the premiums of the policy. At the last meeting of the Board they realized that they had failed even to ask Turrel to report and that they have to pay in about $14,000 to make up for the arears. This oversight is typical of the general negligence that marks the work of the SAJ.

And yet I cannot say that they are not trying to please me. When I say they, I mean about two or three people. I do not flatter myself into believing that their interest in me would by itself be strong enough to impel them to act graciously toward me. Some other incentive has to be added. For example, there came recently an artist from Palestine, Joseph Tepper, who exhibited his pictures at the SAJ. He somehow got into the good graces of Charles Cohen and his wife and asked them to get me to sit for him for a picture. I at first demurred, but when he pleaded with me that I consent, and I realized that it would mean a considerable help to him financially, I yielded. So most unexpectedly I came to pose for a painting which is rather a good likeness of me. He caught the general wistful gloom of the mood that comes over me either when I realize my mental limitations or as a result of

my physical distemper. I understand that I shall be presented with the picture. I shall not know what to do with it, since not even Lena seems to be enthusiastic over the idea of hanging it in the house. She as much as suggested that it be put in the cellar. I suppose this indicates that I was peeved at her remark. The truth is I was. She probably meant it as a joke, but there are certain things one should not say even in jest. I've said too much already.

I wish to record here the courses given in the Seminary during the last four years:

Year	In Midrash	In Homiletics
1924-25		Interpretation of Genesis
1925-26		The Application of the concepts of God as sovereign, liberator, etc
1926-27		Berman technique
1927-28		The problem of Judaism
1928-29		Interpretation of Genesis
1929-1930		The Meaning of Religion

(continued in Vol. VII, p. 149

How little the SAJ means to me in the way of spiritual encouragement can be seen from the fact that I almost forgot to mention that on March 13 we went through the motions of a fifth anniversary celebration. It was devoid of genuine spirit and enthusiasm. If it left so little of an impression on me, one can gather how little it meant to the other participants. The only thing I recall was the fact that Harry Liebovitz, who on previous occasions evinced some real feeling for the SAJ indulged this time in a series of colorless platitudes that had as much relevance to the purposes of the Society as to the Versailles Treaty.

This is half-past two in the morning of June 1. I couldn't fall asleep so I got into my bathrobe and sat down at my desk with the view of continuing to read Hirsch's "Horeb" which I had been working on before I went to bed. But my mind is altogether too agitated to be able to concentrate on that book. I am a good deal unnerved as I realize that I am getting older and am not succeeding in putting out anything in print. Of course I know that it is my inability to concentrate sufficiently on any one piece of work, and my tendency to flit from subject to abject that is responsible for my failure. But why am I so eaten up with ambition? etc etc. I cannot go on writing in this vein. Could anything be more like the self-pity of an adolescent than this kind of discourse? Back to work!

* * *

Thursday, June 9, 1927,(1:40 A.M.)

I do not know why I find it so hard to write about myself. But as I think of it I really do know why. It is this terrible urge to do something worth while which leads me to regard as wasted every movement that I spend without improving my knowledge or mental power. I live inwardly as though I had but a short time to live and wanted to accomplish something substantial before it was too late. I suppose most people who combine mediocrity with inordinate ambition are always in a hurry. My mind is as littered and haphazard as my desk is now. Just to give an idea how I spent my day, one of those precious days when I am free from the routhe of preaching and teaching. I rose at 8:30 after about 6½ hours sleep. Got down town to the Teachers Institute at 10:30 to attend a meeting of the T.I. Faculty. The meeting lasted till 4:15 P.M. Chipkin kept me till 4:45. Got home by 5:15; had appointment with Dinin till 5:30 then with a representative of Macmillan's (not about book of my own) which lasted till 6:30. Supper and lolling about till 8:00, visited a sick member and took

a walk. Returned from walk at 10. Played two games of chess with Nathan (for the first time in years) till 11. Worked on selections from the Bible for Responsive readings till 12:30. Studied a folio from Babba Kama (for the first time in months). A remark by Chertoff in the course of the meeting to the effect that it is impossible to have a fundamental knowledge of things Jewish without knowing the Talmud is responsible for this sudden impule to read Talmud and for the hope that I might devote one hour at least daily. When I studied it I could not help feeling that it had as much bearing on life as the game of chess which I had played before. (It occurred to me that some one ought to work out a glossary of those Talmudisms that have become part of our literary heritage, expressions like

etc.).

After that I turned to the preface to Krochmal's by Ravidowitz.

I have been living through a great deal of my own experience as I was reading Krochmal's biography. He is certainly to be admired for having succeeded to break through that pall of superstitious ignorance and fanaticism that lay upon Galician Jewry of his day. Ravidowitz does not give the slightest indication how it was that Krochmal managed to emancipate himself, whereas Krochaml's brother remained a benighted fanatic like the rest of the people in that little town. How thoroughly I appreciated the two main handicaps from which he suffered and which seemed to have bred in him as they do in me an inferiority complex, one, the lack of an organized academic training in youth, the other the inability to wield a fluent pen. Krochmal seemed always to labor under the drawback of having missed a formal training in Germany. I never had any teachers who took the least interest in me personally. The only one was Zaffe of the Seminary, but he was totally incompetent; in fact, not altogether right in his mind. I never had the opportunity

of enjoying student life on a campus. City College was nothing but a place where the teachers drilled us in a few stupid text books. The other drawback was his lack of fluency in writing. His disciples were all the time urging him to write, but he seemed unable to make much of little. Hehad not the gift of words. How often have I been made to feel small by men like Dushkin, Berkson, Landesman, and even Kadushin for not coming out with anything of consequence. Gamoran almost laughed me to scorn. He is the great man. He wrote and is continually publishing; whereas I came out with an article in several years.

Yet it is all so small and petty. This is the one disgusting feature in the work of the founders of Juedische Wissenschaft. It is an unfortunate fact that not a single one of the movements that represent the efforts of Jewish life to adjust itself to new conditions has so far been marked by any profound spirituality. This is true of the movement to retrieve or reconstruct the past, to reform the tenets and practices of Judaism, to bring about a renaissance of Hebrew literature or to rebuild Palestine. Each of these movements is used by its sponsors chiefly as a means to or an occasion for self-expression. There is no disinterestedness, there is no elimination of self. Would to God that I were able to forget my personal interests in the cause of regenerating Jewish life. But I am just as human as the sponsors of these various movements I have referred to, and I therefore cannot hope to achieve any really noteworthy results. What he Jews need is a man like Ghandi. I consider him the greatest saint that has ever lived not even barring any of our own saints and heroes. Moses must have been a remarkable man; but he is too much overlaid with legend for us to be able to discern his real character.

* * * *

Friday, June 17, 1927

What a funny world we live in! The religious calling is by no means the only one which prevents its followers from being true to their inner convictions. There have appeared a number of articles in the New Republic in the nature of "anonymous confessions" in which men and women in various walks of life are giving their professional or spiritual autobiographies. I just got through reading an article by a college dean. Not having had any real campus experience during my college days - if you can call that dump that used to be on 23 Street and Lexington Ave. a college - I learned something I had never known before about the function of a dean. I mention this because recently I suggested to Dr. Adler that my title at the Seminary be changed from principal to dean. It is stupid of me to pay attention to such vanities but the fact is that I have a good deal of vanity in my makeup which I find very difficult to combat or overcome. But after I learned what it is to be a dean, I ought to stick to my old title, principal.

But what I want to note in particular is how common to all the writers of those autobiographies are the following three features: 1) the sense of futility in most of their activities; 2) a feeling of helplessness in the face of prevailing stupidity and vested interests and 3) self-justification for continuing in one's course on the ground that it does some good anyhow. This writer of the article in Confessions of a College Dean realizes clearly that he is helping to maintain the status quo by the part that he plays, a status quo which he regards with disgust insofar as it involves compelling the majority of 800,000 college students to go through the motions of receiving an education. Yet he refuses to give up his position. In the first place, he is of help to a few real students and secondly, so long as the office of deanship would continue to exist whether he fills it or not, why not

keep out a man who might fool himself and the public into believing that he was actually"doing good." He concludes, "so I shall probably go ahead, solacing myself at times with Falstaff's apology for his highway robbery: 'Why Hal, 'tis my vocation, Hal. 'Tis no sin for a man to labor at his vocation.'" How that strikes home!

Last Sunday the Seminary held its annual graduation exercises. This time they took place at Town Hall. The old Aeolian Hall was bad enough in being completely devoid of proper atmosphere, but at least the place where the faculty and students gathered before the exercises was spacious and furnished. This time, however, we met in the engine room of the building. I never attend any of these affairs without having my vanity injured. It is customary for the faculty to don their academic garb. Being only an M.A. I usually get some filthy rag of a gown with a dirty little hood. I was especially conscious of my inferior academic standing this year, the twenty-fifth anniversary of my graduation from the Seminary. RabbiLevine who is one of the few genuine and saint-like men whom I am privileged to count as a devoted friend, had suggested that the Seminary give me the DHL honoris causa, in the same way as it gave Greenstone for having rendered service to the Jewish cause. In view, however, of what I had done this winter in sending in the resignation and openly stating my views in the Menorah article, the Seminary was precluded from bestowing any recognition upon me. I must say that while such an honor would, no doubt, have pleased my vanity it would have shackled me forever, and therefore have made me extremely unhappy. If I had not gone through the ordeal of offering my resignation and coming out boldly with my views, I would have been miserable the rest of my life. When I took the plunge I was fully aware of the price that I would have to pay for it, and I am mighty happy that I did not even dream of allowing it to deflect me in the least from my purpose.

On Sunday night the Alumni of the Teachers Institute gave me a banquet at the SAJ House in honor of the twenty-fifth anniversary of my graduation from the Seminary. Adler was present at the banquet and gave a few delicate jabs at my definition of Judaism as a civilization but stated in his urbane way that where there was friendship and agreement as to the general aim differences of opinion as regard method and point of view did not constitute a serious problem. Rabbi Levine spoke eloquently in Hebrew, praising me for my tendency to disturb the snug self-complacency of those who think that all was well with Judaism. The others that spoke were Chipkin, Mrs. Epstein, Slavin, Miss Grossman and Starr. Dinin acted as toast master. While I enjoyed the affair, the only time I got a real thrill out of it was as I listened to Levine eulogizing me.

In this morning's Jewish Morning Journal Ephraim Kaplan has an article attacking me for the views I expressed in the Menorah article in the April number of this year.

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Saturday, July 3, 1927, 2 A.M.

With marvelous accuracy Lewisohn describes in "The Creative Life" a predicament like the one I am in when he says of the intellectual, "he has infinite mental reservations - he is, indeed, a creature of mental reservations -- and must first build up a philosophy which will permit him to act with his fellowmen without wholly destroying the honor of his mind." (p.194) My case is evidently very common, or else how could Lewisohn [illegible] it with a fidelity that to me appears uncanny, as when he says "For the intellectual remains a man. He has all the biological, all the atavistic urges. He wants the comfort of being one with his folk, of acting at times at least, out of folk instinct, communal passion, of being leader rather than rebel and martyr."

* * * *

Thursday, July 7, 1927

I returned this morning from the convention of the Rabbinical Assembly which has been taking place at the Brunswick Hotel in Asbury Park. I arrived there Tuesday noon and found about fifty of the members present. After lunch was over, which was about 2:30, the convention opened with a prayer consisting of three short sentences, delivered by the local rabbi Davidson. Drob, the president of the Assembly, read a twelve minute paper from which I remember only two things, one, that the Assembly ought to work out some kind of pension plan and two, that we cannot expect to achieve a uniform philosophy of Judaism, though we may and should have a uniform system of practice. He didn't state the matter quite as plainly as all this. I believe however that this is what he wanted to convey, because he clapped on to what he said the verse h 217 . I stayed for a while after that to listen to some of the reports that were rendered, but having a headache I went to my room to take a nap. When I came down again I found Adler reading a paper on the Rabbinate. I learned that he had been preceded by Israel Goldstein who had read a paper on the need for the Rabbinical Assembly to define more clearly the meaning of conservative Judaism, so as to establish a raison d'etre for our constituting a third party. The discussion which followed had to do only with Goldstein's paper. Jacob Kohn opened the discussion with a question which it took him fifteen minutes to state. The question was "Is it true that we constitute a third party or that we want to be known as such?" Hoffman then arose in all his solemnity and bellowed forth his stereotype speech about Morris Morais and Schechter having dedicated the Seminary to Historical, traditional Judaism, and that we cannot and need not have anything that defines our position more clearly and satisfactorily. Then some one spoke who said nothing except that Goldstein's paper was excellent. Just wherein its excellence lay I could not discover either

in the discussion that it elicited or in the summary that appeared in the Jewish Daily Bulletin. If anything it seems to have been based on a wrong assumption as to the constitution and function of the Rabbinical Assembly and based its appeal for a definition of Conservative Judaism to the most unworthy element in our nature, collective selfishness.

At this point I got up to make my little speech. I gave credit to J. Kohn for having asked the proper question and to Hoffman for having correctly stated the general principles represented by the Seminary and the RA. Then I went one step further and argued that we should not expect all the members of the Assembly to agree in the application of those general principles. We are a compromise organization, just as England is a compromise nation, understanding by compromise the willingness to cooperate on those things which we hold in common and to tolerate each other in things concerning which we differ I pleaded for an attitude of mind on the part of the RA that would permit any group of members who happen to agree in some of the specific applications of those general principles to put those applications into practice without being designated as insurgents by those who differ with them.

Tuesday night Dr. Greenstone led a discussion on the place of religion in the Hebrew school. The discussion meandered over the old familiar ground. At no point in the discussion was there the least intimation of the fact that we are all at sea about what we ourselves should believe. How, then, can we be expected to know what to teach? Assuming that as the head of the Teachers Institute I was expected to say something I made the point that psychologically the teaching of religion as such cannot begin nowadays before the years of adolescence. I also took advantage of this occasion to state that the irreligion which is displayed by some of the Teachers Institute graduates should

not be charged to us, but to the environment. We cannot be expected always to be successful in counteracting the anti-religious influence of the environment.

The next morning was taken up with one long talk on Jewish Law by Ginzberg and two short talks on conditions in Palestine by Prof. Davidson and Rabbi Levinthal. Ginzberg's talk was a repetition in much worse form of the talk I heard him give about three, four years ago at some open meeting of that cryptic organization known as the Jewish Agademy. He always harps on the same string that nobody knows anything or can know anything because everything changes and is the resultant of so many various forces. Then he proceeds to formulate a general principle concerning the spirit of Jewish law - you are left to infer that he with his omniscience is the only one qualified to arrive at general principles. And when you examine what came forth out of the mountainous speech, you find nothing but a tiny little mouse. This time he pronounced in highly oracular form that the spirit of Jewish law is not that of protecting the individual against society but of subordinating the individual to society, as though that was not the spirit of all law. If it were not for the vast learning displayed by him in his notes I would lose my respect for his mental capacity. He has it seems the mentality of a museum curator who in addition to remembering all the specimens in the possession of the museum has a remarkable knack also for arranging them in proper order according to age and country and an excellent power of observation for noting resemblances among these specimens. But take him out into the broad open air of living human problems and you find him treating that life also as though it consisted of nothing but dead specimens that lend themselves to the same curatorial classifications.

He loves me as mch as a cat does a dog. He sees in me the embodiment of a spirit that refuses to accept the ordering and

organization which sponsors the movement to adapt Jewish civil law to modern outlook and conditions. As soon as Levine got through with the paper I suggested that we go on record as approving of the work of that organization, and that we enter into some form of cooperation with it. R. Benjamin, one of the xx obsteperous upholders of Orthodoxy who is quite unscrupulous in his dealings both in and out of the ministry, opposed having anything to do with the the [illegible] but he was over ruled.

On Thursday morning, July 7 I began teaching the third class in the School for Jewish Social Workers. Having the material ready I did not have to spend any time on the lesson before entering the classroom. Nevertheless I managed to get across to the class during the first four hours of instruction far more information and to awaken more of interest than I did in the two previous years, in xxxxxxxx the corresponding time. I feel that the course began, as it were, with a bang. I opened with an outline of the entire course, dwelling upon the significance of the term Jewish ideology and then upon the fact of that ideology having undergone change. I pointed out that the change was more rapid in the beginning of its development and slowed down to a degree of imperceptibility toward the end. Making use of the analogy of gulf stream, I spoke of the philosophic current as the one which we shall study first, because it is more comprehensible to any one who has come under the influence of modern thinking than is the vast ocean of rabbinic ideology in which the Jew moved and had his being prior to the era of enlightenment.

The next day I disported myself by deducing from the fact that Judah ha-Levi was both poet and philosopher the outstanding characteristics of his interpretation of Judaism, and the nature of his contributions to Jewish thought and life. I recall two generalizations I hit off - one was that the poet has a capacity for discovering

continually new sources of interest, or better put, he is the man who finds life perennially interesting; the other was in answer to the question: Is not fear the origin of religion? To which I replied "Of the religion of fear." But inasmuch as there also is the religion of hope and the religion of love we must look for their origin to other sources than fear.

Yesterday Rabbis Rubenowitz, Solomon Goldman, Kadushin and Eugene Kohn spent the afternoon at my house and also a goodly part of the evening discussing plans of cooperating in behalf of progress in Judaism from the point of view of Judaism as a civilization. Rubenowitz favored employing the SAJ form of organization to get our ideas across to the laity. The others felt that there were not enough men and women among their members who were ripe for the SAJ movement. We finally decided to issue a volume of essays to consist of articles by the five of us and by the two others whom we are willing to include in our number at the present time, namely Aaronson of Minneapolis and Alex Burnstein at present of New Bedford. These articles should deal with applications of our point of view to various phases of Jewish life and thought.

In the midst of our discussions Jacob Kohn arrived in the capacity of moderator sent by Finkelstein, Epstein et al to ask us to do nothing as a group by ourselves. I understand that on Thursday the discussions at the convention of the RA were a continuation of those of the day before, and that Ginzberg got once more into a rage, but cooled down after a while, when he realized that there were a good many men who were no longer intimidated by him. After the discussion Epstein and Finkelstein took our group to task for carrying on a round robin correspondence. Jacob Kohn who should be entirely on our side is inhibited by some inexplicable motive from coming out openly as one of the liberals. I hope and pray that this new proposal will not go up in smoke as did the proposal last

Today I consummated the induction into Judaism of a R. A. Hanna, a young man of Catholic parentage. Jessie Wachman, the daughter of one of my dearest friends who is a devoted member of the SAJ fell in love with this Mr. Hanna. Her sister also fell in love with a Gentile. Wachman who had lost his wife when they were still young children refused to marry a second time in order not to mar their happiness, and did all in his power to give them a good education and to imbue them with a love for Judaism. They got a smattering of Jewish knowledge in the extension classes conducted by the Bureau of Jewish Education. When they grew up, however, and went into journalistic work, they preferred the society of Gentiles to that of Jews, with the result that they fell in love with Gentiles. Wachman learning of the possibility of their marrying Gentiles, availed himself two years ago of the opportunity of sending them to Palestine. That was at the time of the opening of the University in Jerusalem. He had hoped that the change of scenery and a love that they might acquire for things Jewish while in Palestine might divert their minds from their Gentile friends. They travelled on the same steamer with me. Not having had an inkling of all these facts, and interpreting their failure to engage me in conversation as deliberate aloofness on their part I reciprocated by having very little to do with them throughout the entire trip. Now they tell me that they were under the impression that I was busy with my own work and did not care to be bothered by them.

When they came back to this country they were drawn again to the Gentiles with whom they had fallen in love. Benderly worked very hard with them and with their two Gentile friends to get them to give up the idea of marrying. He pleaded that Wachman's life was at stake. Wachman had threatened ~~he would~~ to commit suicide. I then told Benderly that he was entirely on the wrong track. The thing to do was to urge the men to accept Judaism and to persuade Wachman that since inter-

marriage was inevitable, wisdom demanded that instead of taking an intransigeant attitude we should encourage the men in such a case to become proselytes. I maintain that if we will persist in regarding proselytes as inferior in social status and treat such intermarriages as a misfortune, the Jews in this country are bound to disappear within three or four generations. That so vital a problem is not even mentioned in the proceedings of our various national organizations of congregations, and rabbinic conferences, is proof of the selfish and short-sighted policies of our leaders.

To return to the Wachman case, it became evident after a while that the girls would not think of giving up their fiances. One of the men then came to me and expressed a desire to become a Jew. I did not want to admit him to Judaism merely for the sake of avoiding a tragedy, I therefore spent a good deal of time with him in pointing out to him that Judaism had the potentialities of a great spiritual civilization. I spoke to him in exactly the same vein that I have to employ with some of the more intelligent and recalcitrant of my students. He underwent the rite of circumcision and today Jacob Kohn Reuben Weilerstein and I acted as a Beth Din to witness his Tebilah and to induct him formally into Judaism. The ceremony took place at the YMHA building, Lexington Avenue cor. 92 St.

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Tuesday, July 19, 1927

On Thursday, July 14 I officiated at the wedding of the proselyte Raphael A. Hanna and Miss Jessie Wachman. The wedding took place at her sister's home, 27 W. 86 St. Dr. Benderly was also present and acted as witness. The day following I received a long letter from Thomas B. Sherman the other gentile who wants to marry the other Miss Wachman. He is an older and far more sophisticated person than Hanna. He can see no reason for committing himself to Judaism except to please

his fiancee's father. One cannot blame him for taking that attitude when so many of our own people would be only too happy to escape Judaism if they could, and when there is so little to show for what Judaism accomplishes in the life of its so called adherents. His main contention is "Speaking generally I would say that an individual is in a higher state of development when he is primarily conscious of himself in his relationship to the whole process of life rather than as a part of a small group." This is the attitude of the majority of intellectuals in our day and almost entirely of Jewish intellectuals.

I happened to meet a Jewish principal of a public school by the name of Goldfarb last Sunday when I went to visit J. Bromberg who recently lost his father. In the course of the conversation I had with him I found out that the heder education in Judaism that he got in his youth has set his heart and his mind against Judaism. He is actively indifferent to anything Jewish. He has not the least idea nor does he care to know about what is happening to the Jews, to Palestine, to the efforts that the Jews are making to adjust themselves in this country socially and spiritually. He imagines that Jewish education is exactly where it was twenty-five years ago when he was a boy. His mother, who comes from an Orthodox home, sends ~~their~~ her children to a Reform Sunday School on Sunday, and to a heder during the week. But the father hardly seems to approve and he waits for the day when the child will become bar-mizvah and he will tell him that Judaism is all bunk.

In the face of conditions such as these how ~~difficult~~ difficult it is to persuade oneself or others that Judaism still possesses latent possibilities of a high order. We lack leaders, we lack thinkers, and we have no lay group that holds out any promise of producing or encouraging either the one or the other. We have not a decent hand book on Judaism. Sherman who refuses to see anything worthwhile to Jewish

affiliation writes in his letter, "Within the last two weeks I have practically completed the History of the Jewish People which I thought much duller than it should have been in view of the color and sweep of the subject."

I expect to see Benderly tomorrow night with reference to the attitude I ought take in the Sherman-Wachman matter. Is it right for me to admit Sherman into Judaism, since there seems to be little likelihood of his or his wife ever taking it seriously? On the other hand if a revival were to take place in Jewish life their children might grow up good Jews. With the decrease of population staring us Jews in the face, every person added to our ranks is by no means a negligible asset.

If there was anything needed to add to my unceasing perplexities and anxieties about the Jewish future, it came about through the glimpse which I got into Zionist affairs through my having been elected at the last Zionist convention to the Administrative committee. The waste and inefficiency which have been permitted to go on unhindered in the Zionist organization of this country have rolled up a deficit amounting to $156,000. The temper of those who have been running the affairs of the ZOA was reflected in Maurice Samuel's remark at the last meeting of the Administrative Committee which I attended. He said what is a "lumpige Summe" of $156,000? In the collections of the Keren Hayesod I understand about 40 to 50 per cent is spent on overhead. Yet this waste is parsimony in comparison with the way Zionist affairs are managed in Palestine itself, where I understand the Zionist undertakings have rolled up a total deficit of over $5,000,000. I am almost becoming a convert to Fascism when I consider how the Labor Party with whose aspirations I had identified myself completely has been most instrumental in wrecking the attempt to rebuild the land.

It would be ridiculous for me to be pottering around with cultural work when what the organization needs is some Hercules to clean out the Augean stables which it has called into existence. I sent in today my resignation from the Administrative Committeee. In my letter I do not make the slightest mention of the rotten state of affairs that prevail in the work, but allude merely to the lack of time to undertake Organization work. There would be no sense for me to get into a controversy which would lead to no constructive result and would rob me of the little peace of mind I manage to eke out from the cheerless vista of Jewish life.

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Wednesday, July 20, 1927

The death by drowning of Montague Lamport, the twenty-four year old son of Sol Lamport last Sunday morning has brought me once again face to face with the fundamental problem of life's meaning and purpose. The few remarks that I knew I would be asked to make at the funeral made it necessary for me to rethink the meaning of [illegible] Fortunately I am unable to get away with a few stereotype phrases which clergymen of all denominations use upon such occasions. To say anything to the point upon so tragic an occasion involved my organizing once again my ideas concerning God. What I did say was completely subersive of the traditional notion of [illegible] yet Rabbi Drob who is a fundamentalist and who officiated together with me, complimented me upon my remarks.

This is the idea I developed: Vindicating the ways of God as a means of taking up life's task in spite of the catastrophe which has occurred cannot take place in the traditional way of regarding calamities as punishment for sins. We must learn to vindicate God by conceiving Him as the general who orders the vast army of the living in its combat against blind chance and the unconscious cruelties of

nature. When our beloved fall at our side the thought that there is a God who is a [illegible] אפקד עקבי אלהים who is leading us on in this warfare against the evils of mere chance should hearten us to keep on fighting. As such leader of the forces of life, God grieves with us over those who perish through no fault of theirs. Even over those who die for and through their sins God is said to mourn all the more over those who pay with their life for their courage and virtue.

This conception of God is undoubtedly heretical from the standpoint of Jewish thinkers of the past. But the fear of being guilty of heresy does not affect me in the least. I am chiefly interested in having a conception of the universe and of God which can give me courage to go on fighting against the terrible odds of unwarranted suffering and meaningless death. I prefer God without perfection than perfection without God. The God of philosophy is perfection with a capital P, cold, impersonal, immovable, infinitely negative.

It is because God is to me the warm personal element in Life's inner urge to creativity and self-expression that I can conscientiously employ the name YHWH when praying. Although I would not dream of implying that our ancestors had any such conception of God as I stated above, or that they used the name YHWH for such a conception, I do believe that the ancients in general with their polytheisms and henotheisms had a far more correct intuition of the God-idea than the philosophic monotheists or deists.

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Sunday, July 24, 1927

The untimely death of Julius Dracsler which occurred Friday night shook my nerves again. Yesterday morning Karpf informed me of the news and asked that I officiate at the funeral. Here I was planning

to proceed with the writing of the book on Judaism as a civilization at least 1000 words daily for the next month or two, when I learned of Drachsler's death and had to direct my thoughts to the formulation of a fitting eulogy. I know it is ridiculous of me to show this impatience because of my inability to carry out some little task upon which I have set my heart when I see the lives of such young people being snuffed out. But I see no reason for not recording my foolishness as well as the more worthwhile ideas that come to me.

If any man deserved that a tribute be paid to him it was certainly Drachsler. I am grateful that I was compelled to gather together the threads of my memories of him. I hadn't seen him for the last three years. Every time I made an attempt to visit him at the sanitarium where he had been confined by tuberculosis, I was given to understand that it was best for him not to be troubled by visitors. When I thought over his career and his qualities of mind and heart I realized how much I loved him and how much his death means to me. He was a man of high intellectual aesthetic and ethical standards, honest in every fibre of his being, a lover of the truth and devoted to the right. He was one of the small group I met at the YMHA about fourteen years ago. I believe it was at my insistance that he became interested in the problem of assimilation and democracy. I have never heard him utter a single word that did not reflect high mindedness, generosity and deep insight into human nature. He wielded a facile pen and spoke a classic English. I can see no reason why he may not in all justice be deemed a saint. For even in the matter of his physical condition, he seemed to be aware for a number of years that he was doomed, yet he never betrayed his fear to anyone. p 234

Last Friday Robert Stroock, the son of Sol Stroock called. He graduated this year from Harvard. For his graduation thesis he took as his subject Jeremy Taylor's contribution to the Church-State problem. Having become interested in the problem of religion, he found my recent article in the Menorah very much to his liking. His father sent me a copy of the essay on Jeremy Taylor and asked me to fix a time when I could see Robert. The latter alluded to the fact that he had sought enlightenment on the question of religion from Schulman and Wise with little result. He expressed his displeasure with Reform Judaism because it reduces the whole of Judaism to philanthropy. On that point he added, he disagreed also with his father.

In the course of my conversation with him I suggested to him that the only way to get to the bottom of the State-Church question is to approach the study of religion from the psycho-sociological aspect. For that purpose I recommended Durkheim's Elementary Forms, etc King's Department of Religion and Ames' Psychology of Religious Exp.

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Monday, July 25, 1927

Last night I went to perform the duty of comforting the mourners to the Baumgolds who had lost their father. I came in time for the services. These were conducted by inmates from the Home for the Aged on 107 St. and Fifth Ave. which is maintained by the "Daughters of Israel." The two Baumgolds and myself were the only normal people there. All the rest - about ten - were inmates of the Home. They were a very poor looking lot, seedy and unkempt.

When the services were over the Baumgolds asked me into the living room where their wives were conversing with Lena. Looking about for a subject to talk about I made inquiries concerning the Home ~~for~~ in which the Baumgold's were interested. I learned the following facts which illustrate the paradoxes that exist in American

Jewish life:

The Home recently put up a new building which cost $1,000,000. Of that amount about $350,000 is in mortgate. The cost of maintaining it is $200,000 per annum. The number of inmates until recently was not more than 100. At present there are about 150. (I am inclined to doubt that there are as many as that.) This institution is doing exactly the same kind of work as the "Daughters of Jacob" which spends on the average $600 a day. I am certain that the 150 old people maintained by the Daughters of Israel could have been taken care of by the Daughters of Jacob at a relatively small additional cost.

Such conditions are permitted to exist while Jewish education, both elementary and advanced, has to go begging for mere pittances and while the Seminary with a budget of about $150,000 cannot make ends meet, and a thousand other important activities are being starved.

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Sunday, August 21, 1927

On Thursday, August 11 Lena and I left for Camp Modin, Canaan, Me., where our children are spending their vacation. On the way we stopped at Portland to see Mother and Sophie. Mother looked very haggard and Sophie looked quite well considering the terrible strain she had been under on account of her husband's nervous breakdown. Happily we met her at a time when her husband was well on the way to recovery. Otherwise God knows what an ordeal he would have had to face. As it was she gave expression to fearful anxiety about his making a living. In every one of her letters she keeps on repeating that she will repay all the money that had been sent her by friends and the alumni of the Seminary. Jews of our type do not know what life is. We are forever in dread of the morrow, and as for bearing up under today's evil, that is altogether out of question. Certainly the vaunted effects of religion as a source of strength in time of trouble

is mere fiction in a case like Sophie's. To all intents her husband might have been a cobbler and her father a tailor, for all the good that she ever got out of religion.

In camp we found our children in good health and all but Judith utilizing their entire time in camp activities which are for the most part of an athletic nature. There is entirely too much devotion to athleticism in the camps and the mental life of the children is permitted to remain in abeyance practically the entire nine weeks that the children are out there. I was especially annoyed at seeing Judith devote her time to a handful of rather pampered children. I am sure that she derived little satisfaction from her work. She directs the singing and the religious services. As for the former it is of a rather elementary character; as for the latter (reading services) she gets very little cooperation from the other counselors and little response from the children. Then again how can one expect children to appreciate the purpose of worshipping a God whom they do not see in a language they do not understand. I think that those who are really anxious to promote the spirit of worship are foolish for chapening the practice by urging all and sundry to worship. Worship ought to be absolutely forbidden to most people on the ground that they are taking the name of God in vain. Certainly children and morons ought not to be permitted to worship and mature persons should be permitted only on condition they concentrate their thoughts on what they are saying. If I had my way I would prohibit keeping our eyes open while praying. Closing the eyes eliminates a goodly portion of the things that distract. If praying had been treated as a privilege, then there is no doubt that more people whould have prayed and more sincerity might have been developed in prayer.

I had congenial company in the persons of Dr. Perlman, the principal of Teachers College, Louis Horwich, the head of the Jewish educational work in Boston, and Berkson. We spoke a good deal in Hebrew and the conversation often turned upon matters of moment. The pleasure of Lena's and my stay was marred by Lena's trouble with her eyes. Ever since the Friday we came to Portland she has been suffering from double vision. A country doctor in Watertown whom she went to see, scared us with his suggestion that there might be something organically wrong with her. Thank G. the physician in the city has set our minds ease on that score.

We came back to New York Tuesday, August 16, 1927.

Last Saturday Lena and I spent with the Barons at Woodmere. On Saturday morning I attended services at the Temple. There were present about ten men, mostly old, and fifteen women, mostly decrepit. The rabbi is Dubin, a graduate of the Teachers Institute who instead of taking up Jewish education got a pulpit and then joined the Institute of Religion from which he graduated last year. He does not impress me as being much of a scholar or thinker, though he does seem to be rather earnest judging from the little joy he seems to be getting out of the rabbinate. When he came to see me about two years ago I seemed to have had a discouraging effect upon him. This time, however, in view of the new plans that I am developing in my writings I feel somewhat more sanguine. I told him about my idea of the Kehillah as a form of organization that should supplant congregationalism and he seemed to be impressed. What led me to touch upon this question was the hopelessness into which he seemed to find himself on account of the various social clubs which are undermining the synagogue.

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Sunday, September 4, 1927, 1:30 A.M.

I just finished reading Lewis Mumford's The Golden Day. It is in moments such as these that I understand the meaning of the word beatitude. I imagine that that was how the author of the 118th psalm felt when he rose from reading the Torah.

* ** * *

Friday, September 23, 1927

I have been very much agitated spiritually the last few weeks. A feeling that human life is a hopelessly irredeemable chaos has come to take strong possession of me. Very often as I am about to fall asleep the thought occurs to me that this sense of weariness with life is the way we are gradually being prepared to meet the inevitable. If we could only slip away from this meaningless scene unawares! I wonder how a man like Benderly manages to keep up the fight with unabated courage. It must be that he has still many illusions that I have long lost. He is far from feeling as despondent about the Jews and Judaism as I am. Perhaps it is due to the fact that his wife is as immersed in the work which he is trying to do as he is. But whatever the cause maybe I deem him a marvel of inexhaustible energy and idealism. Thank God that I know at least one man for whom I entertain unstinted admiration. If I were of the worshipping kind I would adopt him as my saint, because he combines in himself unselfishness and courage both physical and mora.

Recently Benderly hit upon a new plan in his effort to circumvent the difficulty of finding time for Jewish studies amidst all the tasks which the schools and other activities impose upon our young people. He has devised a scheme whereby young people would be able to educate themselves under guidance and supervision. He has tried out this scheme with a group of youngsters from the Hebrew high schools which are conducted by the Bureau of Jewish Education. Selecting

seventy of the brightest representing the four years of the high school course, he gave them work during the summer. They had to come but once a week to report on their studies and hand in their xxx written work. In addition he had them come in shifts of about fifteen for a period of two weeks in a sort of summer camp which he established next to his home in Arverne. The results accomplished within ten weeks both in actual knowledge imparted and in enthusiasm generated, far exceeded the expectations of the teachers.

* * * *

Sunday, September 25, 1927

I was especially impressed by the type of curriculum which Dr. Benderly had the teachers work out. I would call it a synthetic, because in contrast with the curricula generally in use which break up the material of knowledge into various subjects like history, literature, composition, religion, etc., the material is divided according to epochs and each eppch is illustrated by a study of the sources bearing on it. This method of organizing the subject matter appealed to me as of tremendous pedagogic significance, and I became anxious forthwith that a similar type of curriculum be adopted in the Teachers Institute. Especially after the students will have become accustomed to that kind of curriculum in the High School classes, our present method would seem to them not only a retrogression but would lead to unwarranted repetition of subject matter. I, accordingly began to plan a curriculum in which the epochal division of subject matter would have the added element of evaluation. Each epoch would be treated from the standpoint of permanent values that have actually emerged from it: e.g.,

1. The period between 586 B.C.E. to 70 C. E. would be treated from the standpoint of the outstanding "value" which it produced a type of civilization which had for its body an international

nation with Palestine as a center, and for its dominant method a monotheistic and nomistic religion;

2. During the period between 70 to 800 the Jews evolved a decentralized international civilization with a nomistic and otherworldly religion as its principal object of interest. During this epoch the civilization is embodied in Mishpat, Mizvah and Aggadah;

3. In contrast with the previous period during which Jewish life remained practically indigenous it came into contact during the next period 800-1750 with non-Jewish civilizations. As a result, the international decentralized civilization gave rise to new cultural forms, philosophy, literature and mysticism;

4. The period beginning with 1750 when the forces that ultimately made for emancipation and enlightenment began to operate until the present time marks the progress of more intimate contact with and the growth of opportunities for assimilating the cultural life of the Gentile world. As to what values will emerge from the problems presented to the Jewish people, there are in the main four tendencies to supply the answer, Orthodoxy, Reformism, Nationalism and Assimilationism;

5. The last part of the course would deal with the Biblical period which would be treated in true historic fashion showing what it actually was like before it became material for later interpretation and reinterpretation, and how far those elements which these interpretations rendered explicit was actually implicit in the civilization during the biblical stage.

I rather welcomed this opportunity to work out in my own mind an orderly presentation of the different epochs of the Jewish civilization from the standpoint of the cultural forms or values that emerged from each unit of that civilization. Honor and Benderly spent the greater part of Monday, September 6 discussing this plan which I out-

lined to them. They were very much impressed by it. The more I thought about it the more plausible it appeared to me, particularly because it seemed to possess the advantage of giving the students not only an evolutionary but also a symmetrical conception of Judaism. As the curriculum of the Institute is constituted at present the students are bound to get a very lopsided notion of the contents of Judaism. They know at first hand the sources of the biblical period and of the recent Hebraic renaissance. All the rest of Judaism is given them not by means of the sources themselves but through information about the sources.

It was with great impatience that I waited for the opportunity to present my plan to the Teachers Institute faculty. It came on Friday, September 16. Instead of approval or even an inclination to examine its merits, Levine, Bavli, Chertoff and Ovsay launched a violent attack against it. Their main contention insofar as it was relevant - for most of what they had to say on the question was far from the point - was that such an arrangement of subject matter would commit them to a definite historical interpretation of the sources, which in the case of the Bible are often incapable of being placed with any degree of certainty. I naturally foresaw that objection myself. I do not claim that the synthetic curriculum was not beset with difficulties, but what I maintain is that the advantages are so numerous and so great that it is well worth our while to devise some way of overcoming those difficulties. But these men who are both conservative in temperament and quite muddled philosophically, treated those difficulties as though they were insurmountable. Bavli especially delivered himself of an impassioned speech on the value of emotionalism and sentimentalism in education and on the greater importance of making Hebrew the language of instruction in all classes. The meeting which lasted from 10:30 till 2:30 led to no result whatever.

* * * *

Friday, September 30, 1927

I have had a tussle with some of the SAJ members on account of the "Kol Nidrei." Quite a few whom I saw after the summer kept on telling me that the elimination of the "Kol Nidrei" from the Yom Kippur service was the subject of lengthy discussions in various summer resorts among SAJ-ites and their friends. I realized at once that there was opposition in the air and that an attempt would be made to urge me to reinstate the Kol Nidrei. Finally I received a letter from Klein, a lawyer, a good hearted and undereducated man of fifty, and a member of the board, asking me to reconsider the question of Kol Nidrei. The next day Joe Levy came to see me. I mentioned the letter to him. His reply was "You've started a hornet's next with the 'Kol Nidrei'." At this I flew up in the air. He being no less excitable than I am replied in kind. I was ready to throw up the job right there and then. I immediately called up Harry Liebovitz and asked him to call a meeting of the board in order that I might tell them of my inability to preach and conduct the services on the High Holidays, on account of the pestering which I have had to endure because of the Kol Nidrei. Liebovitz consented to have the meeting called but for a later date than I asked for. In the meantime I cooled down somewhat and after further discussion with Joe Levy I decided to send out a letter to all the members inviting them to my house for Saturday, September 24 to discuss the question.

The meeting took place on Thursday, September 22. Klein came out openly as opposed to the change. Being rather simple minded he argued in such a way as to prejudice his own case. "I confess," he said, "that when I used to recite the Kol Nidrei, I had in mind praying for atonement in case I made a promise to contribute to any institution and failed to pay in time." This naturally confirmed me in my convication that a text which was capable of being so interpreted as

to condone delinquencies ought not to be tolerated as a part of the ritual. I was very much upset at the idea of having to argue and defend such simple and elementary principles. I told them that I have been contemplating all the time to introduce thoroughgoing changes into the order of service, in order to comply as far as possible with that one of the thirteen principles in which we emphasize the importance of having our worship xxxx sincere, and here they make it difficult for me to carry through the very first step in the process.

At the meeting on Saturday the following came: Rosenblatt, Shevitz, Siegel, Lein, Goel (all of them between fifty and sixty) Munchin and his wife, Lubetkin and his wife, Joe Levy.

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Wednesday night, October 19, 1927 (Hebrew, p 243)

Seeing that it was futile to try to convince the majority of those present, I compromised by promising to permit those who wanted to say the Kol Nidre by themselves to do so sotto voice after the congregation will have listened to the chanting of the 130 Pslam. When one has to contend against such crass ignorance as exhibited by men like Klein and Goel who cannot read a word of Hebrew outside of the routine prayers, all reasoning is in vain. Munchin suggested that instead of having the Kol Nidrei serve as a means of absolving from vows we should on the contrary eliminate from the text the word and make it a means of confirming the vows and promises. When I made this concession Levy and the Lubetkins took me to task for weakening. So also did Harry Liebovitz later.

In the course of the discussion Klein said that he took Kol Nidrei very seriously. It meant to him a means of clearing his conscience of responsibility for having failed to pay in time his pledge to charity. Lubetkin told of his experience with the practice of p. 244 . As a lad he worked for a Jewish jobber.

Erev Yom Kippur his boss would get together three men and repeat to them the formula about vows and oaths. Lubetkin was often asked to serve as one of the three. He asked once what the ceremony meant. In reply the boss told him that frequently when a customer would begin haggling he would swear by the life of his wife and children to substantiate facts that were not true. In fear lest those oaths take effect he resorted to the ceremony that he knew would destroy their force.

I never realized what a dust the whole question would kick up. Erev Yom Kippur morning as I was dictating my sermon for the evening of that day, the Jewsih Day Bulletin asked me whether I wanted to make a statement about the Kol Nidre. At first I refused, but then I thought to myself "Why not use this opportunity to drive another nail into the coffin of Orthodoxy, by exposing its senseless sentimentalism. I dictated a statement over the phone. It appeared in the Bulletin the day after Yom Kippur. Afterwards I learned of a news item that had appeared in the Jewish Daily News about my decision to allow those who wanted to recite the Kol Nidrei sotto voice to do so. The statement in the Jewish Daily Bulletin seemed to have caused quite a sensation. An article criticisng my action appeared in the Jewish Day. Bril came out with an editorial in the English page of the Jewish Daily News calling upon the Seminary to ask me to resign. I received communications of approval from H. M. Kallen, Smertenko, Rabbi Lichter, Henry Hurwitz, etc. Leading Editorials in last week's issues of the American Hebrew and Jewish Tribune.

Is Jewish life so poverty stricken that a measly practice like that deserves having a fuss made over it? I am simply flabbergasted.

How seriously the majority of the SAJ members and seatholders took the entire question can be judged from the fact that in spite of

the announcement that the Yom Kippur Eve service would begin at 5:30 and in spite of the announcement card that was sent out requesting the people to come on time because the service would begin with opening remarks by me, it was impossible to begin the service before 6:00.

On Sunday, September 18, I took part in cornerstone laying ceremonies of Jacob Kohn's new synagogue on West End Ave. at 100 St. I took occasion to commit him as well as myself to a type of conservative Judaism which is not merely a fifty-fifty proposition. The morning following there appeared in the Times quite an extensive report of what I had said.

The services on the High Holidays and on Succoth were quite successful in point of income and of attendance. My sermons were well received. I managed to lose my temper twice in public within the last three weeks once at the conclusion of the Yom Kippur services when the people made a stampede for the doors before I was through with the Maariv service and the second time when Klein happened to make a funny remark as I was leaving the synagogue instead of going up to the Sukcah. I know that I only make a fool of myself when I lose my temper, but considering the numerous repressions which I have to resort to I might have been a whole lot more explosive. The worst repression of all is that I have to submit to so much useless routine in the practice of Jewish life. Perhaps repression is not the exact term. It is rather the lack of opportunity for self expression spiritually that is the cause of my unhappiness. Not a single person with whom to work and fight in common, that sums up the tragedy of my life.

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Friday, October 22, 1927

The SAJ Review takes away about ten hours of my time each week. If I knew at least that it was read by the majority of the members I would not mind the time I spend on it. Suspecting, however, that very few read it, I had the office send out an inquiry.. All that those who were interested in the Review had to do was to sign their name to the ~~xixf~~ self -addressed post card. Only about sixty out of 150 replied. This, of course, upset me. I know that as soon as I shall make any changes with regard to the issuance of the Review I shall have to waste a lot of time arguing, and I myself will feel all the more disgruntled. For fear that this might break in on the work I am trying so hard to do I believe it will be most advisable to let well (or bad) enough alone. Another effort at repression. It hurts, but what can I do?

* * *

Sunday, October 30, 1927

Recently I have had two young rabbis, one a graduate of the Hebrew Union College and the other a graduate of Wise's Institute of Religion visit me. The former is Rabbi Feinberg of 91 St. Temple, the latter is R. Fischer of some temple in the Washington Heights. Both of them are Zionists and discontented with Reformism. They are searching for some new orientation as well as expression of their Jewishness. At present I cannot be of much help to these men and to others similarly situated. As member of the Executive Committee of the Rabbinic Assembly, I must help the latter body to carry out the resolutions passed at the last convention to have a Committee on Law which is to deal with changes in Jewish practice and ritual. The Committee according to that resolution is supposed to sonsist of ten members, four to represent the right wing, four the left and two who are regarded as neutral. At the last meeting of the Executive Comm.

which took place last Wednesday it was decided that I nominate the four who are to represent the left wing. I expect to name Jacob Kohn, Sol Goldman, Rubenowitz and myself. I have my doubts about the practical outcome of this attempt to make the right and the left work together. But it is my duty to give this committee a fair trial and not to inaugurate anything new without consulting it. I must postpone action at least for this year.

The Junior Class at the Teachers Institute whom I have begun to give the course in religion is causing me annoyance by its recalictrant attitude towards my effort to have them adjust Jewish tradition to the modern man's outlook upon life and history. One of the students who expressed the opinion of quite a few said that as far as she was concerned I was only destroying the implicit faith which she has always had in what she has been taught. She was not troubled about the fact that the Torah said the world was created in six days. On the other hand, there were other students who are not interested in having the biblical story of creation adjusted, since they have ceased believing in it altogether. She gave me to understand that she and some others would not take the course, if they were not forced to do so.

This situation of our people either accepting everything in tradition uncritically or repudiating it completely is the most menacing symptom in Jewish life. It means that the Jewish people is doomed to consist of the mentally backward individuals. Only the mentally unfit will remain Jews. What a tragedy that would be. To prevent such an outcome is the main purpose I want to live for.

Tonight Adler informed me that the Seminary Board of Trustees finally decided at the meeting which took place this afternoon to acquire the plot of ground between 122 St. and 123 St. facing Broadway.

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Saturday night, November 5, 1927

Last Monday night I addressed the students of the Israel Friedlaender classes. Chipkin who is the mainstay of these classes had been advertising them in the Nation and New Republic, and sending out circular letters to numerous institutions. After all that hard labor he managed to get about 150 to 200 students to register. Very few of those who registered are in their second or third year. The cost of these courses is over $18,000 a year. Of that amount the students pay less than one fourth in registration and tuition fees. Whether all this money and effort produces permanent results in terms of Jewish life is questionable. As compared with what that same expenditure would produce if it were incurred for the purpose of conducting congregational activities, there can be no question that it is rich in results. But as compared with what that amount of money could make possible if it were given to two or three men who would devote themselves to the popularization of Jewish knowledge. I cannot consider it well spent when employed on the Friedlaender Classes.

What excellent human material all these young people would present to any one who could come to them with a definite program, and get to know them individually, or at least a large number among them. All that I can do is to deliver one talk at the opening and another one at the closing of the sessions. Seldom do I get a chance even to discuss the courses with the teachers. Chipkind does everything for me. Here am I vainly longing for something to accomplish, yet not availing myself of an opportunity so close at hand. But why mention the Friedlaender classes? Does not the Teachers Institute itself present a most remarkable opportunity for creative effort, for moulding the mind of an entire generation of Jews? Why do I give so little time to it? The answer is very simple. I ought to know myself by this time. There are two factors that prevent me from doing

justice either to the Institute or the Friedlaender Classes. One has to do with economic considerations and the other is a matter of personal ambition. The economic factor operates in the necessity of my doing work for the SAJ, which while not paying me a salary pays toward a life insurance policy of $50,000 and is laying aside annually about $3500 as a capital fund in my name. It pays also for a secretary who helps me with the copying and recopying of the various books and articles that I have been struggling to put out these last fifteen years without any result. That amounts to about $750 per year. It also pays for many books that I could never afford to buy otherwise. That means that I earn from the SAJ directly about $6000 a year and indirectly about $1000 more, through weddings, bar mizvahs, etc. It would certainly be very difficult for me to get along without that amount of income in addition to what I am getting at the Seminary. We certainly do not live extravagantly. Lena and I hardly spend anything on our clothing. The rent $2150 is not a small amount, but the rooms are crowded, poorly lighted, except for the one bedroom occupied by Judith and Hadassah. We could scarcely afford to live less comfortably if we are to do our work. If the Seminary had given me enough to live on I would certainly have had nothing to do with Jewish Centers and SAJs.

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Sunday, November 6, 1927

The other factor which prevents me from giving all of my time to the Institute and Friedlaender Classes is the ambition to do literary work. In justice to myself I must add that much of this ambition is due to my having to show something for being a member of the Seminary faculty, and having to teach the men how to preach. Since it is scarcely possible to teach others how to preach I find it necessary to teach them what to preach. There's the rub. How could I teach

them what to preach unless I gave them some idea of the Jewish problem and its solution. So I am drawn into the whirlpool of questions as to what may be done with our spiritual heritage, as to what objective we should have in mind when urging our people to perpetuate and develop Jewish life etc. For that matter, as soon as I was given charge 18 years ago of the course of religion at the Teachers Institute, I found myself up to my neck in the problem of Judaism. From that time on I have been anxious to work out a philosophy and program. So far that hope has led me on like a will o' the wisp, ever into deeper swamps away from what might have been truly constructive and spiritually satisfying effort, if I had worked more with people and less with ideas.

Last Wednesday night Rabbi Sol Goldman of Cleveland spent about three hours with me. He came to this city with his lawyer in order to be present at the deposition that was being taken by those who have brought charges against him in the Cleveland courts to the effect that in having departed from Orthodoxy he has no right to be the rabbi of the Jewish Center there. He showed me an article which he had written in answer to Melamed's The Uncivilized Jew" which appeared in the October "Reflex." I was pleasantly surprised at the improvement he showed in style and thought. A letter of his which he wrote to Brickner in reference to a statement by the latter in the Jewish Daily Bulletin concerning the Kol Nidre, was couched in words of biting sarcasm. I never knew Goldman could write with so much verve.

I am sorry for him. Even if everything were to go well at the Center he is far too ambitious and able a man to be satisfied with the routine which the rabbinate calls for. And now that he has hands full with the Orthodox bitter enders his lot is by no means enviable.

I should be glad for his sake and for the sake of our cause that he succeed in organizing the young men whom he has been doing work with along Jewish and general lines, into an SAJ group and in becoming its Rabbi. Only this evening when I visited the Unterbergs, Mrs. Unterberg told me that Mr. Bing, the brother-in-law of the young Frank Joseph who was married recently to Adele Unterberg, has organized an SAJ group and that they were planning to ask Goldman to act as its spiritual head.

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Monday, November 28, 1927, 1:30 A.M.

Aweek ago tonight the SAJ held one of those "despair" meetings to which it is condemned by the Board of Trustees when the latter are at their wits' ends to drum up trade and to bolster up enthusiasm. Those who arrange the meeting have usually so little faith in its success that they consider it necessary to invite some lady from a remote suburb who happens to be a relative of the chairman, to render a musical selection on a violin, and as epilogue to provide "eats." Despite repeated announcements by letter and from the pulpit, and inducements of good music and good food only between fifty and sixty people put in appearance. A few more might have come were it not for the fear that they might be asked to help complete the subscription for the bond issue of $75,000 for which up to date only about 40,000 has been subscribed.

The usual palaver indulged in at these meetings resolves about the deficiencies of the organization chief among them being the coldness, cliquishness and unsociability which prevails among the members. It was only one of the very young members that alluded to the need of study groups and Mrs. Adlerblum, a twenty-five dollar associate member, that suggested the printing of the SAJ Review. Either I have gotten callus or have learned to expect very little in the way of

serious understanding and achievement from those who constitute the Society. Whatever the reason I turn tables on them and show them up as indulging in scolding one another and the Society as a whole, I add that they are laboring under a delusion, or a sense of guilt, when they charge me as always scolding them. The fact, however, is that at the Board of Trustees meeting at which it was decided to call this members meeting that I am here describing. I did let myself go and poured forth a violent tirade against the Society as a whole. You will ask how I reconciled such two contradictory attitudes? Answer: In my lamblime remarks to the members I said that it was not with those who were present there that I found fault, but with those who had not shown up. Some of them ought to have been asked to resign long ago. At the Trustees meeting I had used the term "kicked out."

Having just read a review of Baber's life of Wilson, in the New Republic (November 30, 1927) I want to avoid being guilty of Wilsonian hypocrisy or self-delusion. I was of course annoyed by a cynical statement which is only 25% true and which for that reason is more mentally disturbing than if it were altogether a lie. This is the statement: "All that vocabulary of idealism, truth, righteousness, service, faith - which the ordinary public speaker uses without believing in them and almost without the expectation of being believed - all these phrases meant something real to Wilson." Fortunately I happened to read in this month's Harpers the article on the "Cult of the Seamy Side" and I am able to see the fallacy of this kind of cynicism. By the way I was really happy at heart to find myself so strongly corroborated by that article. But it is not always that we remember our best thoughts. They sometimes fail me when I need them most.

Anyhow I felt somewhat relieved when in the same review of Wilson's life I came across the following: "I cannot remember a single passage not merely among Wilson's public utterances but in his letters and diaries themselves where he represents himself for a moment as influenced by anything other than the highest and purest motives." I hope I haven't been guilty of such self-delusion.

I am beginning to suspect considerable resemblance between Jacob Kohn's character and that of Wilson as portrayed in the article, Woodrow Wilson: Political Leader. If that is the case I better keep out of any entangling alliances with him or with his congregation. It appears that his congregation has gotten itself badly into debt through their new building on West End Ave. They are therefore looking about for some group of people that might share with them the financial burdens. A. P. Lubell seems to be anxious for an amalgamation with the SAJ. When that matter was broached to me about three years ago before we bought our present building I turned down the suggestion. At that time I was still resentful of J. Kohn's action at the time the Society of the Jewish Renascence was being attacked. In the meantime my resentment has cooled down and I have begun to consider seriously allying myself with him. My thoughts must have been moving in that direction when I came across a passage in Ludwig's biography of Napoleon in which Napoleon is quoted as saying that one poor general is better than two good generals when a battle is to be fought. For I no sooner read this statement than I congratulated myself for not having consented to the amalgamation of the SAJ with Anshe Hesed Congregation. The reason I have begun to look favorably upon the proposition once again is that I feel myself alone and unable to accomplish anything single-handed. In the meantime the years are slipping by. It is really a confounded shame that the selfishness of us rabbis should stand in the way of the Jews

being able to achieve the reconstruction of their spiritual heritage. Not only is a great reserve of valuable social energy being wasted, but a considerable number of people are foolishly permitting themselves to occupy the enviable position of a minority group without winning for themselves or for the majority any worthwhile "compensation" to make up for their being a nuisance. There are tremendous possibilities and fascinating implications in the conception of Judaism as a civilization. But without an intelligent body of men and women to understand that conception and to be willing to experiment with it, it is a mere dream. If I had Sam Lamport's money I would give at least one million dollars to create the machinery necessary to translate that conception into reality. There is no use trying to convince him of the validity and potency of that idea. He is too much taken up with Sam Lamport to be able to hear or appreciate anything that will not immediately put him in the limelight. I am therefore endeavoring either to find among my colleagues in the ministry, or to create among the students, believers in the idea. So far no sign of co-worker or disciple.

Even the casual discussion I had with J. Kohn last Saturday night while we were walking together to the theatre showed me how incompatible we are in our temperaments. He was lecturing me - he probably didn't intend to, but he has that exhortative way of talking - about the need of tracing to some authority in the past any change we wish to introduce. He was trying to convince me for example, that we can find beginnings of the attempt to legitimatize birth control, in some responsum by Ruttenbourg. I have suspicion that this is "borrowed" learning. Anyhow I know that the Tlamud already alludes to birth control. But to connect that with the notion of birth control as it is advocated nowadays is to ignore the wide gulf that divides us from the past. I personally feel that we shall be much better off if we will have the

courage and honesty to recognize that we have to break in many respects with the past. Let the historians try to point out after we have introduced deliberate changes that in reality the beginnings of our departure may be traced to ancient tradition. But in the program of reconstruction, we should not be prevented from inaugurating new and unprecedented legislation, or eliminating large tracts of ancient legislation altogether, as in the case of those "miswot" which are described as obtaining between man and God.

* * *

Wednesday, November 30, 1927

A little while ago Judith came to me with her problem. In her work at Teachers College at this time of the year she is expected to cooperate with the rest of her class in preparing a musical program for the Christmas celebration, which I believe usually takes place on Friday night. Last year she stayed away. This year the problem has come up again. One of her teachers, a Mr. Dykema, it appears who is himself unaffiliated with any particular church, pointed out in class that in preparing a Christmas program for a public school care must be taken not to hurt the religious sensibilities of the Jewish children. All sectarianism can be removed from the Christmas celebration, according to him, by having it center on the theme of the child as the embodiment of mankind's hope. This reinterpretation led Judith to believe that it would not be wrong for her to take part in the Christmas exercises this year.

In discussing the matter with her I could not but feel that she was not altogether wrong from a logical standpoint. I, therefore, told her that it was entirely up to her. She replied, however, that if she were to act the way she felt about it, she knows I would feel very unhappy, and that I would say to myself "If I can not influence my own children to think as I do, how can I expect the

children of other parents to be influenced by me?" All that I could say in reply was, that the moral pressure which I thus brought to bear on her was no less legitimate than that which brought to bear on her by her Teachers College environment. After all she would not be acting in perfect freedom if she were to take part in the Christmas exercises. She would be yielding to pressure. That being the case I had a right to appeal to her courage which would enable her to bear with equanimity and stoicism the feeling of aloneness into which she was being driven by her Jewishness. Her entire attitude verified the analysis given of the inner struggle that goes on in the minds of most of our young people in that charming booklet by Wolfsohn "Escaping Judaism." If I am not mistaken the appeal with which he concludes is similar to the one I resorted to.

I made it plain to Judith that there was no abstract principle at hand by which it would be possible to decide the right line of action in a matter of this kind. If she were prepared to devote herself to the formulation of an American religion, she would have to include the celebration which takes place at the end of the year. But it would have to be known as Yuletide and not as Christmas. It is impossible to free Christianity from magical implications. Any modern national religion which is to be entirely poetic and social in character would have to leap over the Christological centuries and find its material in the pagan past.

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Monday, December 5, 1927

So many enterprises have been presented to me within the last few days in which I have been asked to take an interest, that my head is in a whirl. One of them is a very minor affair which I am mentioning only for the sake of record. Dr. Faitlowitch came to the SAJ services a week ago Saturday. After the services he came up

to the house and began to bore me with the oft repeated story of his woes, and of the lack of response to Reit's appeal. Reit is the lawyer who si president of the W. 149 St. synagogue where Kadushin used to be the rabbi. He has been induced to accept the chairmanship of the Falasha Activities which means that he has to find the money to cover a deficit of about $12,000 before being able to continue the work. Faitlowitch elicited from me the promise to interest Osserman and to get $300 for the Falasha in the course of the year. I can't say that I am wildly enthusiastic about the whole proposition of Falasha Jews, but I suppose I was too weak to turn down Faitlowitch.

The more important items which I have no time to describe with as much detail as I should like are represented by the following:

1. Sam Lamport joined mine and Judge Mack's name to an invitation which he sent out to a large number of people including a large number of SAJ members to a dinner at the Republican Club, 54 West 40 St. for the purpose of discussing the Jewish Telegraphic Agency and Jewish Bulletin. There were only about four people of means present outside of the staff of the JTA, Judge Mack and myself. I had spent nearly the whole afternoon putting together the few remarks that I expected to make, thinking that there would be at least about one hundred people. The funny part of the affair was that speeches were made as though there were four hundred people present. As for concrete results - almost nil.

2. Saturday afternoon Mrs. Spielberg talked to me for about two and a quarter hours concerning her work which consists of forming an organization to spread the idea of preventive mental hygiene among parents, teachers, social ~~xxx~~ workers, etc.

3. Saturday night A. P. Lubell brought Mr. Siegal and two

Palestinian business men who have come to this country to interest Jews in the establishment of a commercial bank in Palestine.

4. Jacob Kohn saw me this afternoon concerning the questions to be submitted to the Law Committee of the Rabbinic Assembly. We decided that we interrogate concerning the following matters: a) How to arrange the Jewish marriage ceremony so that in case of subsequent grant ofdivorce by the state a Jewish Beth Din should be in a position to act as representative of the husband to grant a Jewish divorce in his name to the wife, with or without her consent? b) How to validate the testimony of a woman in case of the ceremony of submersion to which a would be proselyte woman is expected to submit? c) How to overcome the prohibitions against officiating at a funeral that obtain in the case the rabbi is a "Kohne."

The second matter which he came to see me about was the question of amalgamating his congregation with the SAJ. I explained to him the plan which I would be prepared to approve. According to that plan the congregational activities would be merged. He would have charge of those. He would do the preaching and conduct the school. In addition to that the congregation would set aside a certain amount in the budget specifically for SAJ activities of which I would have charge.

At the meeting of the Board of the SAJ I passed a note to Joe Levy asking him whether I should bring up the matter. He wouldn't even hear of it. He didn't want me to mention it even to the Liebovitz's. His argument was that they would be only too glad to unburden the responsibility.

5. At the Board meeting tonight Joe Levy volunteered to act as chairman of the committee to organize a theatre party for the purpose of securing $5000 to conduct the educational work at the SAJ. I was taken off my feet by the eagerness of H.L. Liebovitz to introduce these courses at once and not to wait till the next year. This means

Wednesday, December 7, 1927

Yesterday I had two visitors, Louis Lipsky and Prof. Gottheil. Lipsky came to ask me with reference to filling the three vacancies in the Administrative Committee of the Zionist organization caused by my refusing to serve, and by the failure of Judge O. Rosalsky and Albert Rosenblatt to report ever since they have been elected. What interested me in Lipsky's analysis of the situation in the administrative committee was the fact that Wise's attack on the British government was part of a maneouvre against Weitzmann, Lindheim and Rosensohn who have charge of the finances are former Brandeis men who at bottom are displeased with Weitzmann's leadership. They naturally play into the hands of Wise. Lipsky had hoped that my presence together with that of Rosalsky and Rosenblatt would throw weight of opinion in favor of Weitzmann's policies by detaching from Lindheim, men like A. Liebovitz and Morrison. I am glad I withstood the allurement of activity in the administrative committee. There are enough necessary evils I have to do with without being dragged into the necessary evil of Zionist politics.

Gottheil came to ask me to give the course in the Semitic department hitherto given by Stephen S. Wise under the name of Jewish Contribution to Civilization. It seems that Wise lost his interest in it. That course was given tremendous publicity about two years ago. Instead of giving it himself, Wise had members of His faculty at the Institute of Religion substitute him. Probably it turned into a fiasco. Shall I take it over? It means only two hours a week. Students from any of the colleges in the University can take it and are given credit. It certainly would afford an excellent opportunity to exert a Jewish influence on a number of young people. There would also be some modicum of prestige and the few hundred dollars in tuition fees. Perhaps also a possibility of getting my three children into Barnard. On the other side, further decentralization of effort and deflection from the things I have been working on.

Thursday, December 8, 1927

I have decided finally not to invite new troubles on my head by urging the amalgamation of the SAJ with Jacob Kohn's synagogue. The last straw ~~xhix~~ that broke the camel's back was the editorial which he wrote for this week's issue of the Review. With so many matters deserving comment he could find nothing else to write about except the irrelevance of my contention against the use of the term conservative. Suppose he disagreed, yet he should have had the common sense to realize that now was not the time to give proof that he was not going to accept any suggestions from me. It is this complex of his against accpting suggestions that opened my eyes to the fact that he would constantly be rubbing me the wrong way.

This afternoon I telephoned to Gottheil consenting to give the course which is to deal with some phase of Judaism. The course is to be given under the auspices of his department.

This month's Reflex attacks me for having made such a fuss about the Kol Nidre. Not guilty.

Today I received from the Executive Committee of the Orthodox Union a reply to my attack on them in the SAJ Review. The letter will appear in next week's issue of the Review.

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Thursday, December 15, 1927

The hour in Homiletics yesterday was an exciting one. Instead of proceeding with the lecture on Orthodox Judaism, I called attention to the wide diversity of opinion and attitude reflected in the papers handed in to me by the men. Some verge on atheism, others avow ultramontane Judaism. The men had no common denominator

to which I could address myself with much profit to them. Hence it was my opinion that they must do something to effect among themselves a meeting of minds. This could come about only through discussion and interchange of ideas. The tendency of the body of students to break up into small cliques of two or three is not helpful. Every man must be in a position to discuss the various phases of the Jewish problem with all the other men in the seminary. If they would read and discuss among themselves the very papers which they have handed in to me much good would result. As I recall the best, and for that matter, the only training I ever obtained at the Seminary was not in any of the ~~dmx~~ classrooms but in the discussions I carried on with my fellow students, Greenstone, Eichler, Solomon, Kauvar and Abramowitz.

After I spoke to them in this vein there broke out a veritable storm of complaints against the Seminary as a whole, and the Faculty in particular. I met the usual charge against the Seminary that it is non-committal in its attitude toward Judaism, by saying that such a charge was unjustified. The Seminary spells three outstanding principles: nationalism, religion, development. The very fact that it does not take a definite stand as to whether men and women may be seated together, or the prayer for sacrifices be omitted, etc. constitutes a principle in itself. That principle is that given those three elements, nationalism, religion and development, we must permit a certain amount of freedom and spontaneity to individuals and groups in the detail application of them to ceremonies, worship, etc. Nothing is to be so strongly deprecated as a regimen that made provision for every move a person has to make. This narrowly legalistic conception of Judaism is no longer tenable or desirable.

What shocked me most, however, was to learn that the greater obstacle in the way of a free interchange of ideas among the students

was the heresy hunting which prevailed among them. Students, especially Freshmen, who venture to express a radical opinion are given to understand by the older students that they dare not harbor such heresies. What is worse, it does not take long before students venturing to speak their minds are betrayed to members of the Faculty. In my own days, of course, there was no occasion for such slander, since we practically had no Faculty. That practice of "making up" to a professor by bringing tales about other students was introduced into the Seminary with the advent of Schechter. He and especially his wife, had in them a good deal of that European ghetto trait of spying and gossipping. Prof. Marx told me that Jacob Kohn used this method of ingratiating himself with the Schechters. That is why he never realized his ambition of becoming a mmber of the Faculty. Kohn would talk about the members of the Faculty as well as about the students. The saying went that before a member of the Faculty formulated an idea inhis own mind, Schechter was already aware of it, so perfect was the line of communication maintained by Jacob Kohn.

Another fact which was brought out during the hour was that the better students were resentful of the way men like Ginsberg and Davidson treated them. No names were mentioned, but I could gather from their remarks to whom they referred. Thus one man Greenstein mentioned the fact that a professor was telling them about the history of [illegible]. When asked as to what should be our attitude toward that practice today the professor replied that he had nothing to do with such a question. His interest was only in the history of the institution.

The only sense in which the attribute of perfection as ascribed to God can make a difference in a person's mood and conduct is the denial of chance or fortuity in the universe. If that is

what perfection as an attribute of God denotes, then I certainly do not subscribe to the notion that God is a perfect being. But I see no reason why the element of chance is necessarily incompatible with the attribute of perfection. On the contrary, in a universe in which there is no room for chance perfection would necessarily be dead and static, like the perfection of a mathematical formula which is true but lifeless. Perfection to be living and dynamic implies operating in a field of negativity which is only another name for chance. To admit that God created a world is to admit that God is a changing Being, for surely a God with a world cannot be the same as God without a world. The moment God is admitted to be a changing Being, His perfection cannot possibly be of the mathematical and static type.

This evening I took Judith in hand and spent with her more than an hour in a heart to heart talk. Lena was present. Judith has been showing evidences of repressed unhappiness. Assuming that it was due to the lack of men's company, I drew that fact out from her and actually suggested to her what to do to meet young men who might take her out of an evening. I suggested to her that she join young people's organizations which are both intellectual and social in character. This is certainly a better way of solving her problem than to go away to Palestine for a year where she thought she would escape from the surroundings in which she moves at present. In these surroundings she encounters young girls half of whom tell her of all the young fellows they went out with and the other half of whom bewail their lot continually that they have no one to go out with.

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Monday, December 19, 1927

What a wonderful thing insurance is, especially life insurance. If I had a chance to begin life over again I'd make a religion